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A

Fish caught in his own Net.

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# EXAMINATION

Of Nine Sermons, from *Matt.* 16. 18.

Published last Year, by Mr *Joseph Fish* of *Stonington* ;

W H E R E I N

He labours to prove, that those called *Standing Churches* in *New-England*, are built upon the *Rock*, and upon the same Principles with the first Fathers of this Country : And that *Separates* and *Baptists* are joining with the *Gates of Hell* against them.

In Answer to which ;

Many of his Mistakes are corrected ; The Constitution of those Churches opened ; the Testimonies of Prophets and Apostles, and also of many of those Fathers are produced, which as plainly condemn his plan, as any Separate or Baptist can do.

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By ISAAC BACKUS. *K*

Pastor of a Church of Christ in *Middleborough*.

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*Go thro', go thro' the Gates ;—gather out the Stones, Lift up a Standard for the People. Isa. 62. 10.*

“ Separation generally hears ill in the world, and yet there is  
“ a separation suitable to the mind of God : He that will  
“ not separate from the world and false worship is a separate  
“ from Christ.”  
Dr. Owen's *Eshed.* p. 36.

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# THE PREFACE.

THE PREFACE is a small but a valuable  
 Appendix; but all would be accounted trivial  
 in the attention from about the book  
 perhaps it is the very thing which is  
 the most important and important  
 subject for the student; for the student who is  
 to read and ponder, and the way of his  
 is speaking the truth in love. (2 Cor. 13:14)  
 But the student who is to be a student of  
 the truth and the way of his  
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## THE PREFACE.

**P**EACE is so lovely in itself, and is so essential to happiness, that all would be accounted friends thereto. The direction from above is, seek peace and pursue it: and the cry from below is peace, peace!

Yet there is a great and important difference between the two languages; for the divine voice is, love the TRUTH and peace; and the way prescribed to promote union is, speaking the TRUTH in love. Zech. 8. 19. Eph. 4. 15. But the two grand engines to support the contrary cause are deceit and violence. Which cause the Prince of peace came into the world on purpose to destroy; and wherever his truth prevails, it breaks up that sort of peace. Hence the charge exhibited against one of his greatest ministers, by men of principal note in the world for religion and order, was, We have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition throughout the world. Acts 24. 5. And it was not only so among the Jews, but also in the capital of a Roman colony; when the power of truth had cut off the hope of an unlawful scheme of gain, the magistrates soon had a complaint laid before them, that, these men do exceedingly trouble our city. Acts 16. 20.

However, this conduct both in Jews and Heathens, is so plainly exposed in the bible, that the whole christian world will condemn it; and who will dare to appear now to plead for a peace contrary to truth? Instead of that, truth is set upon as high a pole among protestants, as the cross is among the papists: and every author that writes, has got the important word wrote in some place, where the reader may not fail to see it. Yet there has been such galling of one another in perverse disputes, and striving about this and other words \* in our day, that some serious people are ready to condemn all disputing, as being a principal cause of all the confusions that appear in our nation and land. Tho' if after the confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, with the great perplexities which were produced by many defeats that we met with in the beginning of the late war, any had said,

*we had better be easy as long as we can, than to oppose the enemy any more; such advice would hardly have passed for good policy, or for a token of true regard to our peace and welfare.*

*All rational attempts to remove calamities, are levelled against the causes of them; and as deceit and violence have been the causes of all our woes from the beginning, so a great part of the work of God's servants in all ages has been to point out and expose the deceits of false men; which has often produced what the prophet speaks of, viz. A voice of the howling of the shepherds; and says he, my soul loathed them, and their soul also, abhorred me. Zech. 11. 3, 8. And things of like nature have appeared in our times, but none are willing to be accounted the idol shepherds; each one would turn it off to others; and many ministers in our land have been labouring these 20 years to fix the odious character upon a number of people who have withdrawn from their societies. Among whom Mr. Fish has lately distinguished himself, by attempting to open the "rise, cause and tendency of these separations and the errors of the anabaptists," in a volume of about 200 pages. This I have been requested by christian friends to write some reply to; but as I have several times, exposed some of my thoughts on these subjects, to the world, I repeatedly told my friends that I thought I had done my part in that way. At length it was urged that many of the first leaders in separation were gone off the stage, and scarce any left that are so fully acquainted with the circumstances and manner of the first separations, as I have been. This argument prevailed so far, that I agreed to take and read the book and act as light might appear. And when I came to read it, no doubt remained whether it ought to be answered or not, tho' the doing of it was far from appearing a pleasing lot to nature. For whatever pleasure it may yield, to appear to the public in matters that are pleasing, or for amusement; yet in war, to be distinguished as a mark for everyone to shoot at, that nature dreads. My unequalness to the task was still a greater difficulty; for tho' it was an easy matter to point out many of Mr. Fish's mistakes and inconsistencies, so as to render his performance contemptible; to do the subject justice, would be nothing less than to lay open the religious constitutions of the whole country, and many transactions which deeply affect the characters of many noted men.*

*Yes to omit it now, could not be done with a clear conscience; for Mr. F. says, "If I have in any instance, mis-*  
*" taken*

" taken facts, or misrepresented persons or things, I desire it  
 " may be corrected." Preface p.4. And after a long discourse  
 on these things, he says, " The foregoing errors, principles,  
 " and groundless offences which they took, the charge of all  
 " which must lie upon them until they purge themselves."  
 p. 164. Therefore to be silent now, would be a letting many  
 things pass for truth, which I knew were not so, tho' many  
 others did not know it. Mr. F. tells us he hopes, if there  
 are any mistakes, " it will be looked upon as simple and unde-  
 " signed." To which I would say, I desire always to avoid  
 the evil of judging the counsels of others hearts, and to judge  
 righteously according to what is made manifest. But as he  
 has manifested that he has mistook the rule itself, throughout  
 his book, I leave him and others to consider how simple or un-  
 designed such a mistake can be; or what less can be expected  
 than false actings upon a false rule. Three witnesses are  
 allowed to prove any point, both by divine and human law:  
 and that number shall suffice for the present to prove that he  
 has mistook, and acted contrary to the golden rule in the af-  
 fair before us.

1. No man, or community can think it reasonable to  
 have their character drawn only by their imperfections with-  
 out any of their virtues: yet Mr. F. after a long attempt to  
 draw the separates " picture to the life," says, " Whatever  
 " good things they have among them, they have them not as  
 " separates, but in common with other christians. The  
 " things that I have told you of above, are their characteris-  
 ticks." p. 160.

2. None can be willing to have the character of their  
 whole denomination taken from evil persons and things which  
 may be pickt out among them: yet in the midst of this labour  
 to draw our picture, he says, " I would not here be under-  
 " stood to represent them all to a man, as advancing and  
 " uniting in every one of the particulars above-mentioned;  
 " but some of them held one, some another." p. 142.

3. No man can rationally be willing to be deprived of the  
 liberty of hearing and judging for himself in important  
 matters; nor to be condemned by others without a fair hear-  
 ing; yet this is the very labour of Mr. Fish's whole book;  
 for a principal reason given for his writing it, in the first page  
 of his preface is, that " a considerable number, if not the  
 " greater part of his few remaining people, inadvertently fa-  
 " voured the separate teachers, so far as to frequent their  
 " meetings." And a special article of advice, in the con-  
 clusion is " Go not after them nor follow them.—How  
 " can



" can you, with any good conscience, after I have shewn you  
 " from whence they arose, their principle, spirit and ten-  
 " dency." p. 191. Thus his whole drift appears to be to  
 keep his people from hearing and judging for themselves.  
 And he has condemned us without a fair hearing : for ac-  
 counts of our principles and practices have been published by  
 various hands, and at different times for these 18 years ; yet  
 it does not appear thro' his whole book, that he has paid any  
 regard to them, even so much as to point out our mistakes or  
 inconsistencies, ( as doubtless he might have found some such ; )  
 but the chief of what he has held forth to the world against  
 us, is upon his own bare word.

I suppose the chief thing which blinded him in these affairs,  
 was a conceit of his good design therein ; for speaking of  
 " the grievous things" which he has written both against se-  
 parates and baptists, he says, " Neither of which should I have  
 " meddled with, could I at this day, have seen how to plead  
 " the cause of the churches ( that our brethren have separa-  
 " ted from) which I believe to be the cause of God, with-  
 " out shewing the younger and reminding the elder among  
 " my people, how and wherein this sacred cause has been  
 " injured." Pref. p. 4. Now 'tis no new thing for men  
 under a strong conceit that they are engaged in a good cause  
 to put good meanings to bad actions of their own, and bad  
 meanings to good actions of others ; yea and to esteem men's  
 works for the persons sake, instead of esteeming the person  
 highly for his work's sake. And this temper will prompt  
 men to think that evil don't belong to the sacred cause that  
 they are in, and that good don't belong to the opposite party,  
 but are intruders on each hand ; and they would attribute  
 the evil among themselves to others, and the good among others  
 to themselves. And is it not from hence that our author,  
 when he is going to reckon up a catalogue of the evil of the  
 times, says, " If the separates are not the only guilty persons,  
 " or not MORE guilty than some that pretend to be of the  
 " standing order, yet 'tis manifest that the following dis-  
 " orders are owing chiefly if not entirely to the SEPARA-  
 " TIONS ?" p. 172. Observe, 'tis only some, and they but  
 pretenders to be of the standing order who are allowed to  
 be guilty, while the real guilt is laid chiefly if not entirely  
 at the separates doors. On the other hand he says, " I  
 " know not of one principle or practice, among them that is  
 " agreeable to the gospel, but what they learned in our  
 " churches." p. 113. This is a fine way indeed of treating  
 mankind !

However



However I trust it will yet be made manifest, that it was what God taught us by his word and spirit, of the corruptions which are allowed, yea and pleaded for to this day, in those churches that caused us to separate from them. But as it seems beneath the dignity of these learned gentlemen to take notice of laymen's writings, I would, to help Mr. F's eye-sight a little, just point him to one who calls him a layman as he does us; and who has got a title as much above him, as he has above us. He has only the title of reverend, but one who has the shocking title given him of reverend Father in God, preached a sermon on Feb. 21. 1766, before the society which supports the church ministers that are sent into this country; wherein he declares that 'PERSECUTION for OPINIONS was the most abominable of all the errors of the antichristian church.' \* And his sermon abounds with the word charity, and he allows that our fathers were driven into this land for conscience sake; yet speaking expressly of those colonies where presbyterianism is established, and remains in its ancient PURITY, he says, "That very people, whose fathers were driven for conscience sake into the waste howling wilderness, are now as ready to laugh at the bible, as at their fathers ruffs and collarbands." † Here is a character given to the world of Mr. Fish's churches, by one who stands so much above them, that he treats them just as these ministers do us, namely to accuse without any proof but great swelling words of their own. And this very accusation from the bishop, is given as the reason of their continuing their labours among us, instead of going on to gospelize the savages, which he allows to be the original design of that society: ‡ for he says, "We might well leave these factious people to themselves, did not a miserable circumstance still call for our rejected charity; I mean, the spreading of GENTILISM in the colonies themselves." †

And if we were to judge by his account it might be thought that such heathenism abounded the most in Connecticut of any part of the land; for by the list of their missionaries at the end of the bishop's sermon, it appears that they have a third more of them there, than in any other colony in America: tho' it looks more rational to me to suppose that the elegy's power being carried to the highest pitch there, is the cause of it. This prelates conduct in this matter has been justly complained of as an open violation of the laws of truth and equity; yet if he were allowed our authors method, to claim all that

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\* Bishop of Gloucester's Sermon before said Society. p. 9.

‡ Page 12, 13.

† Page 8.

† Page 11.

is good among us to his side, because our fathers came out of the church of England; then he might possibly find some such persons in New-England as he speaks of, tho' likely he might find ten to one of that character in his own diocese.

The common name that his charity prompts him to give dissenters in that sermon is fanatics. Now I suppose a proper definition of that name is, that 'tis one who is puffed up with a fancy that he has got some new discovery to make to others. And if so, what shall we think of the bishop of Gloucester? for he gives it in his sermon as a new discovery which he had made, that the savages ought to be civilized as well as christianized; and he attributes their little success in times past, chiefly to the want of knowing, or want of attending to that maxim. Whereas to have told the plain truth, he must have informed his honorable audience, that the reason why they had done so little to christianize the Indians, was because they had spent almost all their labours among the English, and in the most wealthy places that they could get footing in. And if he could have stooped so low as to have looked into the life of Mr. John Eliot in the last century, and the life of Mr. David Brainerd in this, he would have found, (that instead of a new discovery) the very maxim he speaks of was known and acted upon, both in the past and present age, by the most zealous and most successful labourers to bring the Indians to true christianity, that America ever saw.

The bishop proceeds to charge the colonists with the dreadful crime of yearly stealing slaves from the opposite continent, and sacrificing of them to their great idol the GOD OF "GAIN." p. 25. And he says, "Nothing is more certain in itself, and apparent to all, than that the infamous traffic for slaves, directly infringes both divine and human law. Nature created man free, and grace invites him to assert his freedom." p. 26. Who then could think but that this great society for the propagation of the gospel, would set all these slaves at liberty as fast as they could? But behold! The case is altered. For governor Cordington of Barbados, (instead of setting his slaves free) bequeathed a plantation stocked with them to this society; which now is declared to be a pious intention in the donor, "God out of this evil" (says the bishop) having made us the honored instruments of producing good." p. 29. And the good which he talks of is, that while they reap the profits of those slaves, they would use them well, and so set a good example to others: And he says, "It would be impiety to suspect that the society will

"will not persevere in making this use of so fortunate a circumstance." p. 30.

Here is a glass for Mr. F. to look into. A professed minister of Christ, at the head of a society, composed of the chief dignitaries of the church, and of several lords in the state, after exclaiming against persecution, characteriseth the colonists as fanaticks, factious gentiles, yearly practising the worst of heathenism, even the sacrificing of human creatures to an idol; and this from the same mouth that tells of pious designs in all the proceedings of his own party, and that charges it as impiety, even to suspect their perseverance therein! \* But thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

Perhaps some are ready to cry, Who is this, that presumes to correct bishops and ministers at such a rate? Answer, he is a person of very little note in the learned world, and never was a member of their schools. Indeed they have given him a few titles; as sometimes he has been of a credible family, and so it was wondered at that he would go with such a despicable people; yet anon he was pronounced a young upstart, not to be regarded. One sentence declared him to be a crafty deceiver; the next an honest gump-head. Sometimes 'twas asserted that he was pursuing worldly gain; and at another time they declared that he had little or nothing for his labour, and spent his own estate: but neither so did their witness agree together.

The truth is, what little he does know, was gained in the school which Dr. Franck speaks of, where the highest wisdom is, to know Jesus Christ and him crucified; and wherein things are taught in an experimental way. Hence the reader will find several lessons in the ensuing pages, repeated in that manner: and tho' he is not insensible that telling of experience, is treated with contempt by the fashionable christians of our day, yet he is not daunted at their sneers, while he sees the chief apostle of the circumcision taking this method to satisfy his brethren; and the great apostle of the Gentiles doing the same before his learned persecutors, when they were complained of, for leaving the customs of their fathers, Acts 11: 4,—18. & 22. 1—21. One special order of that school is, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. But all things that are reprov'd,

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"are

\*And all this to move people to contribute money to that Society: yet church-men have as great a hand in the slave-trade as any.



# P R E F A C E

are made manifest by the light. This he takes to be a sufficient warrant for improving a fair opportunity to attempt to hold up light to his fellow-men, and to labour to convince all he can, be they ever so much above him, wherein they have mistook darkness for light; and he expects the same from others.

He would be far from representing Mr. Fish as singular in what he has now published. No; his sermons are a proper specimen of what has often been delivered from pulpits in our land; for more than 20 years; and being persuaded that many worthy men, both in public and private stations, have not known the true state of these affairs, therefore the author was induced to enlarge more upon them, than his love of brevity would otherwise have permitted. And may we all so speak and so hear and do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

Middleborough, March 25. 1768.

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## The Introduction.

Containing some brief Remarks upon the  
Characters which Mr. Fish gives of a  
Church of Christ.

HOSE who desire to bring any controversy  
to a just issue, will endeavor to hold up what  
light they can, concerning the merits of the  
cause, and not amuse or perplex others minds  
with things foreign from the things in hand :  
therefore, as Mr. Fish begins his preface with this informa-  
tion, that “ The special occasion of the following discourse  
“ was, the revival of the spirit and principles of *separation*  
“ and *anabaptism* ;” I shall endeavor, according to the  
light I may be favoured with, to attend closely to these  
points, and shew wherein the difference between us lies,  
and the grounds of that difference.

‘ I heartily concur with him that the *truth* which *Peter*  
‘ confessed, or the person of Christ, of whom this confession  
‘ is made, is the rock, upon which Jesus Christ resolves to  
‘ build his church;’ and that *Peter* was “ one of those lively  
‘ stones, or precious materials of that building.” page 3.  
But I can’t say so of some of the *characters* which he gives  
to describe the church of Christ by ; the first of which is,  
“ That Jesus Christ has but one church in the world,  
“ and that it is the *same* which it always was.” To ex-  
plain which he says, “ We gentile believers were grafted  
“ in among the Jewish believers, making one church.  
“ As the apostle Paul shews, *Rom.* 11. 17. And the whole  
“ is but the continuation of the same church, from the be-  
“ ginning of the world.” p. 6. 7. It is readily granted  
that the *invisible* church is always the same ; but that is  
not what Mr. F. intends ; for he has just before said, “ I  
“ mean to speak of Christ’s *visible* Church upon earth.—  
“ which contains both good and bad, true believers and  
“ nominal.” And his *sixth* character of the church is only  
an explanation of this : which is, that “ The church of

"Christ has always consisted of visible believing parents  
 "and their children bound together by covenant to be  
 "the Lords." p. 22. And after some discourse upon *Abraham's* covenant he says, "Hence it appears that believ-  
 "ing parents cannot enter into *that* covenant which God  
 "made with *Abraham*, without taking their children with  
 "them.—They therefore that take God for their God,  
 "but not the God of their seed, *equally so*; they leave  
 "out *half*, or the *greater part* of the subjects of it." p. 24, 25. He adds "If any say that this promise *To*  
 "*thee and thy seed after thee*, under the gospel, intends  
 "thy seed or children when they are grown up, or be-  
 "come *actual believers*; and not while they are in a state  
 "of infancy, I apprehend the exposition will not stand." And after citing *Deut. 29. 10, &c.* he says, "Here you  
 "see, that great and small, parents and children, even  
 "little ones, stand forth in a body, that they might all  
 "enter into (or renew) covenant with their God.—Which  
 "shows that *children*, even *infants* were always reckoned  
 "a part of that *body or church*, which the Lord gathered  
 "in *Abraham's family*." p. 25, 26.

'Tis true that this was the constitution of the church which was gathered in *Abraham's family*, as appears from verse 13 which is, *That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

But when Mr. Fish says, "Is it not altogether reason-  
 "able to suppose that the christian church is made up of  
 "the same materials that the jewish church was?" The answer must be No, by no means; because God has said the contrary; and 'tis perfect madness to set up our *suppositions* and *reasonings* against divine revelation. Now that God has said the contrary, appears from *Jer. 31. 31, 32.* Where he says, "Behold, the days come, saith the  
 "Lord, that I will make a *new covenant* with the house  
 "of *Israel*; *not according to the covenant* that I made  
 "with their fathers in the day that I took them by the  
 "hand, to bring them out of the land of *Egypt*." Those who stood forth then as a body to enter into covenant, tho' they had seen great signs and miracles; yet the Lord had not given them an *heart to perceive, eyes to see, nor ears to hear*, unto that day. But of this new covenant he says, "I will put my law in their *inward parts*, and write it in  
 "their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be  
 "my

"my people; and they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." The constitution, priesthood and ordinances of the jewish church, served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things; but this is a better covenant which is established upon better promises. That old covenant Israel brake, and he regarded them not: But this new covenant is established upon better promises, which are, *I will, and they shall.* Heb. 8. 5—13.

I cannot imagine that 'tis possible for words to express more plainly than these do, that there is an essential difference between the materials, as well as the forms of the two churches; even the same that there is between shadow and substance, flesh and spirit, type and antitype. All Abraham's natural seed were circumcised, and God said, *my covenant shall be in your flesh*; and all his seed in a gospel sense have the law written in their hearts, and their sins shall be remembered no more. Heb. 10. 16, 17. Accordingly it was such as gladly received the word, and such as should be saved, that were added to the church, in the apostles times, Acts 2. And when some of a contrary character got in, they are said to creep in unawares, Gal. 2. 4. Jude 4. Therefore I think we may justly return our author's question, and say, Is it not altogether unreasonable to suppose that the christian church is made up of the same materials the jewish church was; since the holy Ghost has so plainly declared the contrary?

Having given a few of my thoughts upon Mr. Fish's first mark of a true church; and also of his sixth which explained it, I come to his second, which is, that the churches "Foundation is one, and ever the same." p. 7. This is strictly true of the invisible church, but the leaders of the visible church when Jesus came, where builders who set at nought this glorious corner-stone; and he shews that none build on the Rock but such as hear his sayings and do them, Mat. 7. 24. Faith cometh by hearing: and those who hear and believe with their hearts, ought to confess with their mouths, and obey all Christ's commands, and thus they are built up for an habitation of God thro' the Spirit. In this sense I would join with him.

His third mark is, that "Christ Jesus was always the head and king of his church." p. 9. So he is: and I heartily concur with him that our Lord Jesus "has done enough to make us tremble at the thoughts of attempting any thing."



" thing, in his house and worship, which he has not directed  
 " us to do, much more any thing that he has forbidden."  
 Our authors fourth character is, " Christ's church has  
 " always been furnished with officers of his appointing."  
 p. 11. Here again we agree in general truths; but when  
 he comes to trace the order down from the beginning, why  
 was his memory so short as never to mention the *prophets* in  
 the jewish church, while he enlarges upon the case of the  
*priests* and *Levites*? Perhaps he might think the latter would  
 best agree with his notion of a *line of succession*; but he may  
 find himself mistaken there. For after the return of the *Jews*  
 from *Babylon*, some of the children of the *priests*, sought  
 their *register* among those that were reckoned by *genealogy*,  
 but they were not found: therefore they were, as *polluted*,  
*put from the priesthood*. Ezra 2. 62. Now if the power  
 of ordination is not in the church, but is *wholly* committed  
 to the *ministers* of the churches, as Mr. F. expressly holds  
 (p. 80. 145.) then, according to this plain example, every  
 minister who can't produce the *register* of his ordination,  
 as being derived in an *uninterrupted line* down from the  
*apostles*, he ought as *polluted* to be *put from the ministry*.  
 And where will he and his brethren be then?

Indeed he would have us think that they have such a re-  
 gister where the very *names* of such a line is preserved. p. 18.  
 But it seems by the margin that 'tis in *Latin*, and as we are  
 come out of the *Latin* church, we shall expect to hear it in  
*English* before we believe it. *Paul's charge* is not to give  
 heed to *fables* and *endless genealogies*, which minister *questi-*  
*ons*, rather than *godly edifying*. 1 Tim. 1. 4. And how  
 fully have these words been verified in the disputes which  
*patholics*, *prelates*, and *psepheters* have had upon this affair  
 these many hundred years? and it still ministers *question*  
 which are as much unresolved, as when they began the  
 dispute.

Our author's *fifth* character is, that " The church of  
 " Christ is a confederate people, a people in visible covenant  
 " with God and with one another," p. 19. This is true,  
 and so is his *seventh*, that 'tis " further known by special  
 " ordinances which God hath given it," p. 34. Tho' it  
 ought to be remembred that the false church hath covenants  
 and ordinances as well as the true, only the true church  
 endeavours to keep to the divine pattern; while the false, adds  
 inventions of her own. These are therefore by no means  
 so plain marks to distinguish the true church as his *eighth*  
 and last is; viz. that " Christ's church has always had,

" and



"and always will have his holy spirit dwelling in it." p. 44. This is a great truth; for if one church as well as person, have not the *Spirit of Christ*, it is *none of his*. Thus I have given a little touch upon the *characteristics* which Mr. F. has given of the church: two of them I think are not true, in the others we agree in general, tho' when we come to apply them the difference between us will more distinctly open in many particulars.

Part. I. The *constitution* which Mr. F. pleads for, opened, and proved to be essentially different from the first churches in this Country.

When Mr. F. comes to apply these characters, he, to prepare the way promiseth several things, the substance of which are, That the rule is perfect, but the best of men are imperfect, so that when they come with honest hearts to apply divine rules, they differ so widely in their opinions upon some modes of worship, as to render it difficult, if not impracticable for them to worship harmoniously together: which shews the necessity as well as grounds of mutual forbearance, and should make us cautious how we give hard names. These are weighty considerations, and if they had continued with due weight upon his mind thro' his following discourses, it would doubtless have prevented my troubling him in the affair; but since it has proved to be otherwise, I will also give mine opinion; and then leave it with the reader to judge for himself.

Our author first applies his rules to those which he calls *standing churches*, and he says, "We have sufficient reason to be comfortably satisfied that these churches are true churches of Jesus Christ." p. 78. As to their *constitution*, he says, "They are in general of the *congregational* way; and altho' in many parts, particularly in this colony, they are for mutual benefit, *confociated* or united together by agreement, yet they remain *congregational*," p. 79.

This title, as I understand, is derived from the fathers of this country, therefore we must look there for its true meaning. Now *Cambridge platform* says, the church since the coming of Christ is "only congregational, therefore neither national, provincial nor classical." National churches have their parishes, for managing the common affairs of their worship, who yet are under the government of the whole: But the plan before us in express distinction therefrom, has the whole power of church government in each

each particular church, "power to open and shut, to chuse  
" and refuse, to constitute in office, and remove from  
" office." This is the express meaning of the name, as it  
is explained by our fathers who gave it : And tho' they  
freely improved the advice and assistance of other churches,  
yet it was as *sisters* or *equals*, who still had the whole  
right of government within each church.

And are the standing churches such ? No, Mr. F. has  
not got two pages forward, before he lays down this as the  
first thing which ought to be *corrected* in the churches, viz.  
" The imposition of hands at the ordaining of elders,  
" which, says he, I apprehend the gospel has committed  
" wholly to the care of the *presbytery*, or *ministers* of the  
" churches ; but is by the indulgent *Cambridge* platform,  
" disposed of to the *brethren*, at the pleasure of the  
" church." p. 80. Thus while he usurps the name, be-  
cause 'tis credible, he denies a principal point in its  
meaning, and directly sets up a power above the churches ;  
for, if the power of ordination is not *in* the church, then  
she must be beholden to a power *without* her, and so *above*  
her, to give her office-authority. But our fathers had seen  
too much of this spiritual tyranny, to be willing to come  
under it again ; and as they knew that the *church*  
*of the living God*, is *the pillar and ground of the*  
*truth*, \* they rested the matter there, and desired  
with *Timothy* to behave as they ought, *in the house*  
*of God* ; but not like *Diotrephes* to love a *pre-eminence*  
*over it*. However Mr. F. would have it that their *practice*  
was not agreeable to their *principles*, and says *Plymouth*  
church " attempted not to ordain a minister merely as  
a church," of brethren only, with their own hands." p. 84.  
But Mr. *Prince* who knew as well as he, informs us con-  
cerning the first church in *Salem*, that on *Aug. 6. 1629.*  
" They proceeded to *ordain their ministers* ; as also Mr.  
" *Houghton* a ruling elder ; being separated to their seve-  
" ral offices by the imposition of the hands of some of the  
" *brethren* appointed by the church thereto : Governor  
" *Bradford* and others, as *messengers* from the church of  
" *Plymouth*, being by cross winds hindered from being pre-  
" sent in the former part of the service, came time enough  
" to give them the *right hand of fellowship*." † If any say  
these ministers had been ordained by bishops before, I an-  
swer, that they were now *out of that order*, and we are  
expressly told that one of them was "*silenced for noncon-*  
*formity.*"

\* 1 Tim. 3. 15. John 3. 9, 10.

† New-England chronology p. 190, 191.

formity," \* And they did not hold the *indivisible character*, but were, as we have just seen, so consistent as to know that "to constitute in office, & remove from office, are acts belonging to the same power;" therefore, as they were put out of office, by the *same power* that put them in, they were now ordained anew. The like was done to Mr. *Wilson* the first minister of *Boston*. Indeed a late honorable historian tells us, concerning him, that "all joined in a protestation that it was not a renouncing of the ministry he received in *England*, but that "it was a confirmation, in consequence of their election." † Upon which I would desire leave to observe, that none could have reason to think that they renounced his right to improve his ministerial gift; but tis plain that they judged *this ordination* to be needful to put him into the office here. And the same author informs us in the next page, that one distinguishing character of a congregational church is, "That there is no jurisdiction to which particular churches are or ought to be subject, by way of authoritative censure, nor any other church power, extrinsecal to such churches; which they ought to depend upon any other sort of men for the exercise of."

Here the point turns: We all hold it proper occasionally to improve the advice and gifts of other churches, while all are equal as to power: but all ministers who think they have a power to impart to another church, which that church has not within itself, and has not a right to exercise without assistance received from abroad; they are not congregational men, let them pretend what they will.

Another great point in the congregational plan is, that the "power to open and shut," is in the church as a body; and therefore that they all ought to hear and judge of the evidence that any give of their right to be received as members. Dr. *Increase Mather* says, "There is no congregational man, but he reports to the church something of what the person desiring communion with them, has related to him; which the *presbyterian* does not, only declares his own satisfaction, and giveth the brethren a liberty to object against their conversation." † And he tells us, that in the declaration of the *fairness and order* of the congregational churches in *England*, given at *Savoy*, Oct. 12. 1658. They declare, || "That the members

\* *New England chronology*, Page 182.

† *Mr. Hutchinson's history of the Massachusetts*, vol. I. p. 419.

‡ *Mitchel's Life*. dedicat. p. 23. || *Ibid*. p. 24.



“ members of particular churches are saints by calling,  
 “ visibly manifesting their obedience to the call of Christ,  
 “ who being further known to each other, by their con-  
 “ fession of faith, wrought *in them* by the power of God,  
 “ declared by themselves, or otherwise manifested, consent  
 “ to walk together according to the appointment of  
 “ Christ.” The doctor further says, “ It is evident, that  
 “ the church (and not the officers only) have power  
 “ given them by Christ to judge who are meet to be *put*  
 “ *out* of their communion. Matt. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 12.  
 “ Then they must needs have the like power as to those  
 “ that are to be *taken into* their communion.” And is  
 this the way now of the churches Mr. F. pleads for? No,  
 I never knew an instance in my day, of any who were  
 admitted into any of those churches, by declaring *personally*  
*the faith wrought in* their souls; and a great part  
 of them have now dropt even giving *written relations*.

This leads us down to a third article of difference which  
 is the root of all, namely, the *matter* of a gospel church.  
 We have already seen that Mr. F. supposeth that the  
 “ christian church is made up of the same *materials* that  
 “ the jewish church was.” But the *Cambridge* platform  
 expressly says, “ The *matter* of a visible church are saints  
 “ by calling, 1 Cor. 1. 2. Eph. 1. 1.” and that the church  
 “ under the law, was *national*, which since the coming of  
 “ Christ is *only congregational*; therefore neither national,  
 “ provincial nor classical.” Yet Mr. *Fish* has the face to  
 tell the world that their “ churches are, in general, pro-  
 “ perly *congregational*.” And then goes on to produce the  
 testimony of president *Oaks* in favour of that plan, as the  
 “ highest step that has been taken towards *reformation*;”  
 to which he says, “ The venerable Dr. *Increase Mather*  
 “ adds the weight of his approbation,” p. 86. After which,  
 a long quotation is produced from the doctor in favor of  
 the *college*, from whence almost all the churches were sup-  
 plied with ministers; yet he stopt a little too short at  
 last; for that venerable author’s next words are these, viz.  
 “ Nor are the churches like to continue *pure golden can-*  
 “ *dlesticks*, if the *college*, which should supply them, prove  
*apostate*.” And in the same book, he lets us know what  
 he means by that dreadful name, “ The debasing, says  
 “ he, the *matter* of particular churches must needs corrupt  
 “ them. A learned and renowned author (i. e. Dr. *Owen*)  
 “ has evidenced that the letting go this principle, that  
 “ particular



“ particular churches ought to consist of *regenerate persons*, brought in the great *apostate of the christian church*.  
 “ The way to prevent the like *apostacy*, (says Dr. Mather)\*  
 “ in these churches, is to require an *account* of those that  
 “ offer themselves to communion therein, concerning the  
 “ *work of God on their souls*, as well as concerning their  
 “ knowledge and belief. \* And he tells us † that “ Blessed  
 “ Mr. *Mitchel* would frequently assert, that if it should pass  
 “ for current doctrine in *New-England*, that all persons  
 “ *orthodox in judgment*, as to matters of faith, not *scanda-*  
 “ *lous in life*, ought to be admitted to partake of the  
 “ Lord’s supper, without an examination, concerning the  
 “ *work of saving grace in their hearts*, it would be a real  
 “ *apostacy* from former principles.”

And are ministers now of these sentiments ? A worthy gentleman told me that he sat a number of years at *Marblehead*, under the ministry of ‡ Mr. *Holyoke*, before he was elected president of the same college that these words were directed to ; and that his common method of admitting members into the church was without giving them any relation of experiences at all, either verbal or written ; and that has now got to be a prevailing custom in many parts of the country. Yet ministers pretend to be upon the same foundation with those fathers. But here is a treble testimony that they are *apostates* therefrom. And Dr. *Increase Mather* had such a view of its coming on, that he said in the year 1700, that “ If the begun *apostacy* should proceed as fast the next thirty years, as it has done the last, surely it will come to that in *New-England*, (except the gospel itself depart with the order of it) that the most conscientious people therein, will think themselves concerned to *gather churches out of churches*.” §

Now we may form some judgment how far this apostacy had proceeded, when our separation began, more than forty years afterwards, by a sort of *pastoral letter*, which all the ministers in *Windham* county published against us ; wherein they say, “ This notion of a pure church, as separating the converted from the unconverted, is contrary to the revealed will of God. This is as evident as any thing can be by that way of evidence, in divers parables of our Savior,” p. 20. The first parable which

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they

\* *Mitchel’s life*. dedicat. p. 27. & 16. † *Ibid.* p. 10.

‡ He has been president of *Harvard College* this 30 years.

§ See the preface to his vindication of the order of the churches in *New-England*.

they refer us to, is that of the *tares of the field*, in Matt. 13. 24. &c. And they say, "Our Savior explains it to his disciples, as you see from verse 37. Where he says, *The field is the world*; in which therefore is this kingdom of heaven. *The good seed are the children of the kingdom*; but the *tares are the children of the wicked one*. Both the one and the other are in the kingdom of heaven which is in this world, i. e. *the visible church*," p. 21. And after giving their thoughts upon several other scriptures, they say, "There are many other texts which might be urged, and plainly shew, that it is the will of Christ, that all those who make an *outward credible profession of christianity*, should be admitted into his church, and tho' *unconverted be there* among the wheat the honorable vessels, so long as he has a church in the world, that they may be under proper ordinances for their conversion, and for the trial of his people, and their usefulness to them, &c." p. 23.

I leave the reader to judge how near this doctrine comes to what Mr. *Mitchel* and other fathers call *apostacy*, and also how *current* this doctrine has past, when the ministers of a whole county, have published it to the world; and would only remark here, that they have done like those who formerly made *void* the divine command by their own *traditions*; for as they have contradicted our saviour in explaining the parable of the *tares*, and the *field* which he says is the *world*, they say is the *church*; so they have made void his command in this very affair. His command is, *Let both grow together*: but their practice has said, No, they shall not; for as soon as any appear'd against their schemes, they would not let them grow, nor enjoy their natural rights. Mr. *Finley*, who has since been president of *New-Jersey* college, happened to come in those times to *New-Haven*, and only for his preaching to the separates there, he was taken up by civil officers and carried out of the colony; and those who belong'd among us, that ventured publickly to improve their gifts without the ministers licence, were not suffered to enjoy *worldly* privileges, but were taken up one after another, and cast into prison. Yea, these very men who cried so loud for *Peace*, yet prepared such *war against* those who would not put into their mouths, \* as not only to load them with slander and reproach, but also to send their servants, and take away their goods by force † This was done in many places, till the practice

\* Micah 3. 3.

† 1 Sam. 2. 16.

practice became so odious that none would buy such goods; and then they took to seizing their persons. I have an account before me of no less than *eleven* persons who were seized thus and carried to jail in *Norwich* only in 8 months, after *June 17, 1752*. one of which was a *widow* 54 years old who belonged to another church, where she attended, and did her part towards the support of divine worship, according to her conscience, and had no concern with the parish minister; therefore she did not think that the rate which was demanded for him was just: yet for her refusing to pay it, she was taken, and, tho' a weakly woman was carried to prison in a dark rainy night. One told them then that it look'd like the *works of darkness*. But the christian character she bore, and the christian temper which she and others then discovered, greatly weakened the cause they designed to promote hereby.

Not long after, a gentleman in the same place, was imprisoned for the same cause, while he stood a representative for the town, in the general court. About the same time a single woman of a good character, in *Raynham*, was confined more than 12 months in *Taunton* goal, which the minister might have prevented by crossing out, only an *eight penny* rate. At length the evidence she gave of true *conscientiousness* in the matter, caused such uneasiness among that minister's own people, that they raised money and went and set her at liberty. This is but a little sketch of what has been done of that nature, in various parts of our land.

If any say, Why are these odious things published now? I answer, *Is there not a cause?* When the *Jesuits* complained a few years ago to the king of *Spain*, that many things were published against them, and desired him to forbid it; his reply was, "The way not to have *faults* published, is *not to commit them*." These are often called, *standing churches*; therefore one design of this is to shew what they *stand upon*; even the same that other *national* or *provincial* churches do, — *civil authority*. Hence, how often do they tell us, "That if it were not for the support of the civil powers, their churches would soon be broken up?" And an author of great note has lately told the world that, "After all that may be said in favour of the *constitution*, the *strength* of it lay in the union declared with the civil authority." \* And he gives us an instance of what the authority did to preserve order more than a 100 years ago. He says, † "In 1653 the general court

\* Mr. Hutchinson's history of the Massachusetts, p. 434.

† Ibid, p. 188.



court restrain'd "the north church in *Boston*, from calling Mr. *Powell* to be their minister, who had the character of a *well gifted*, tho' illiterate man." And about the same time he tells us, "They laid a large fine upon the church at *Malden* for chusing a minister without the consent and approbation of the neighbouring churches, and allowance of the magistrates." And he says Mr. *Hubbard* observed upon that occasion that, "All men are naturally so wedded to their own apprehensions that unless there be a *coercive power* to restrain, the order and rule of the gospel will not be attended."

I am much obliged to his Honor for the ingenuous account which he has given us of former times: yet I shall take the liberty to say, that if he was not unawares, a little wedded to his own apprehensions, I hardly think he would have called this, a *just observation*; for elsewhere, speaking of the tests which had been imposed by authority in both *Englands* to produce *uniformity in religion*, he says, "Both the one and the other must have occasioned much *formality and hypocrisy*. The mysteries of our holy religion have been *prostituted* to mere *secular views and advantages*." \* Now the test refer'd to, restrained *civil freemen* from chusing any into civil offices, who were not church members; and is it not as bad to restrain the *Lord's freemen* from chusing any into office in his church, who have not been members of human schools of learning?

"The experience of all reformed churches," is appealed to for proof, that this *coercive power* is needful to keep the *order of the gospel*: but the same appeal might more justly be made, to prove that the clergy, when *thus* supported, have been the most tyrannical of all men; which has often served to harden infidels against all gospel preachers. A plain reason why such men have been the most tyrannical, is because they claim authority, more immediately from the *higher power*, than others do. Tho' civil authority is of divine appointment, as well as ecclesiastical; yet the highest civil rulers know, that they are set up and supported by men, while the others elaim a commission from God. Hence they have often assumed authority over the very rulers that set them up.

And since we are often represented as *rebels*; † I will

\* Ibid. p. 431.

† Mr. *Lord* who has been a minister in *Norwich*, the place of my nativity, above fifty years, expressly compares our separation to

a little further lay open my views of this affair ; which are, that, as civil rulers ought to be men fearing God, and hating covetousness, and to be terrors to evil doers, and a praise to them who do well ; and as ministers ought to pray for rulers, and to teach the people to be subject to them ; So there may and ought to be a sweet harmony between them ; yet as there is a great difference between the nature of their work, they never ought to have *such a union* together, as was described above.

For, 1. The holy ghost calls the orders and laws of civil states *ordinances of man*, 1 Pet. 2. 13. But all the rules and orders of divine worship are *ordinances of God* ; and it *defiles the earth under its inhabitants*, when these laws are *transgressed*, and *ordinances changed*. Isa. 24. 5. And one of his laws is, " AS EVERY man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God GIVETH : that God in all things may be glorified thro' Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. But this law and order has been so much *changed* in our land, that churches have not looked so much at the *ability* which God has given, as to the *titles* which man has bestowed. I say *titles*, for many of their ministers have not *gifts* to deliver a sermon without *reading* ; notwithstanding their *name* of being *learned men*. And yet it is called, the " order of the gospel," now, to have such men's *persons in admiration* so as not to chuse any others into the ministry, lest man's *glory should be brought down*, while we are represented as proud rebels, for not owning them as such.

2. The civil magistrates work is, to promote order and peace among men, in their moral behaviour towards each other, so that every person among all denominations who doth *that which is good* may have *praise of the same* ; and and that all contrary behaviour may be restrained, or foreibly

a rebellion in the STATE, Sermon at Mr. Hart's ordination, p. 18. And he with six other ministers as plainly compared us to Core and his company, in their preface to Mr. Dickinson's dialogue, p. 7. Now observe Core raised a *rebellion* in Israel, where ruler, priest and laws were appointed immediately from heaven ; and where the church was not *national* : yet it has been the constant method of these, who pretend to be *congregational* men, for these 26 years, to compare us to Core, which naturally implies, that they think themselves to be like *Moses* and *Aaron*.

forcibly punished. And as all sorts of men are members of civil society, and partake of the benefits of such government, therefore they ought to be *subject*, and pay *tribute* to rulers. Rom. 13. 1—6. But the work of gospel ministers is to labour to *open mens eyes*, and to *turn them from darkness unto light*, and *from the power of Satan unto God*. Acts. 26. 18. And as any kind of *force* tends to shut the eyes rather than open them; therefore Christ's special orders to his first ministers were, *Freely ye have received, freely give. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house; or city, shake off the dust of your feet*, Mat. 10. 8, 14. This should be a *testimony* against them, that Christ's ministers had not forcibly taken from them so much as the dust of their city, Luk. 9. 5.

But we have a set of men in our day, who profess to be Christ's *ambassadors*, and yet they act so contrary to these orders, that if they once can get footing in a town or parish, let people dislike them ever so much, they will not go out without a considerable quantity of white or yellow dust. Yea, we have had several instances, wherein both church and society have been wearied out with these men, and have voted them out of their meeting-house, and yet where a little number would follow them, they have held meeting in their own house for months or years, and then have applied to the powers which these churches stand upon, and they have forced the whole parish to pay the minister for all that time. And one minister has lately found out, that for any to come and profess to "preach the gospel freely, without being chargeable to their hearers;" is so far from being an evidence that they are the true ministers of Jesus Christ, and sent by him, that 'tis (extraordinaries excepted) an argument why they should "be suspected," \*

This

\* Mr. Fish page 63. 65. *Extraordinary*, is a great word, and great things are done by it. The power of Christ in *qualifying* men for the ministry, without going to colleges for them, is hereby limited to the apostles days; and all are rejected with contempt by Mr. F. who do not now receive their gifts at college, and their authority from "authorized hands," p. 15,—17. And these "authorized hands," by the help of this word have got such an extraordinary power as the apostles never had. For the apostles were only *witnesses* for Christ, and as such pointed out to the church, what qualifications officers should have, and said, *Brethren look ye out among you such men*, Act. 8. & 6. 3. But these



This is indeed an extraordinary discovery, and he seems not a little pleased with it. And it must be acknowledged that if this be a true discovery, we are in a deplorable case ; for we used to think the gospel's being *freely preached to the poor*, was a convincing evidence that the Messiah is come, (Mat. 11. 5.) And if it is not so, we have been hitherto deluded, and must look out for new teachings, if not for a new bible.

However we will endeavor to search our old bible a little more before we part with it. The passage which our author attempts to draw this new discovery from, is 2 Cor. 11. 12. Now a material point, in order to come at the meaning of the text, is to know what those false apostles *gloried in*. Our author supposeth that they gloried in preaching freely without taking any thing for it : but in v. 20. speaking of the same persons, Paul says, *Ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself.* The clause, *take of you* ; Dr. Gill says, the Arabic version reads, — “Took away their goods from them by force.” This they did to *exalt themselves* : and if we look back to the foregoing chapter, we shall find, that the ways of these teachers, was to *commend themselves*, and despise the apostle : *His bodily presence, say they, is weak, and his speech contemptible.* When he first appeared among that people, he wrought at tent-making, on week days, and reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath. \* And his preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. † Therefore they despised him, and commended themselves, as being men who made a much better appearance, and taught in a more agreeable manner than the tent-maker did : but says he, *Do ye look on things after the outward appearance ?* || — It was a special command of our Lord, *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* And he gives this rule to judge by, namely, *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh HIS glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness in him.* §

This is the rule to try all teachers by. The occasion of its being given was, the different opinions that people

These pretended successors of the apostles, assume a power to limit the church, in her choice to such as they have *approved* ; which I trust will be made evident to be a power which the apostles never had.

\* Acts 18. 3, 4. † 1 Cor. 2. 4. || 2 Cor. 10. 7, 10. § John 7. 18, 24.

had concerning the teacher of teachers, some saying, *He is a good man*, others saying, *Nay; but he deceiveth the people*: and a particular difficulty which labored in their minds concerning him, was, that he had *never learned letters* in their way. \* Therefore he says, judge not according to the *appearance*; yet this rule was not attended to among the *Corinthians*; and instead of it, those teachers who despised the apostle, *measured themselves by themselves, and compared themselves among themselves*: but he durst not *make himself of their number*. † These things shew what those teachers *gloried in*. And Paul declares his *godly jealousy* over the *Corinthians*, in the beginning of this 11th chapter; and his fear lest their minds should be *corrupted* from the *simplicity that is in Christ*. Therefore to prevent their being further imposed upon, (tho' it be folly for a man to *commend* himself, yet) he would *answer a fool according to his folly*, to prevent their being *wise in their own conceits*. And he sets out to compare notes with them, and says; *I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles*. And as to the low appearance which he made among them, he asks, *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself, that you may be exalted, because I preached to you the gospel of God freely?* And proceeds to shew how he had received support from other churches *to do them service*: and he takes a solemn oath, that *no man* in their regions should stop him of this *boasting*; not because he did not love them; But, says he, *what I do, I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we*; for such are *false apostles &c.* Now if they had gloried in preaching for nothing, 'tis certain from v. 20. that the *Corinthians* knew that they practised the contrary; and Paul would not have said, —*even as we*, to that. Wherefore Dr. Gill ‡ thinks his meaning is, “ That these men were desirous that he would take wages, because they did; that in this respect he might not excel them, and that they might be able to plead his example and authority, and so get an occasion of extorting more money from the *Corinthians*.: wherefore to cut off all such occasion from them, the apostle resolves to take nothing himself; that whereas they boasted they were equal to, or superior to the apostles, they might

“ be

\* verse 12. 15.

† 2 Cor. 10. 12.

‡ Exposition of the new-testament, vol. 2. p. 76g.

"be found, would they follow their example, even as they, not taking any money at all of them, and poor, working with their own hands."

I cannot find the least account of their glorying in preaching without wages; but I have shewn something of what they did glory in: and the apostle proceeds further and says, *I speak foolishly; are they Hebrews? so am I: are they Israelites? so am I: are they the seed of Abraham? so am I: are they ministers of Christ? I am more.* Thus he shews that as to outward appearance he could vie with them; while in real services and sufferings for Christ, he vastly exceeded them. Yea, while they had taken much from that church only for a *shew* of service, he had done them much *real* service without taking any thing at all of them.

I shall close this head with this remark; that while Mr. F. seems pleased with what he tho't would do great execution against us, he has unawares involved himself in a sad *dilemma*: for if the case be as I have represented, he stands a fair chance of falling among false teachers: but if his sense of the text be right, he shews a want of *Paul's* temper, and instead of cutting off occasion of being called a hireling, he still pleads up for that scheme, which often extorts wages from such as receive no service from them, instead of doing real service without wages as *Paul* did. At the same time he endeavors artfully to blend a *free* support to ministers, and a *forced* one together; whereas there is as much difference between them, as there is between the power of truth in the mind, and the power of the civil sword on the body. The first is abundantly clear in scripture, the other has no warrant there.

3. Another difference between civil and ecclesiastical government is, that civil states if large, have various degrees of offices one above another, who receive their authority thro' many hands, down from the head, and that often, more according to estate or favor, than merit: but 'tis the reverse in Christ's kingdom; he forbid the first notions of this in his disciples, and expressly told them that it *should not be so* among them, as it was in earthly states, *Mark* 10. 43. *Luk.* 22. 26. An obvious reason of this difference is, that an earthly king cannot in person see, to but little that is done in his kingdom, and therefore must trust others to manage affairs for him in his absence; but Zion's King is present every where, and sees to all that is done, and tells every church, *I know thy works*: and he takes care that the faithful are supported and rewarded, and that the unfaithful are corrected or punished. If civil officers are



resisted or abused, 'tis found necessary, in order to maintain the dignity of government, to inflict corporal punishment on the offenders, if within the state, and to take up the sword against abuses from abroad. And I suppose it is a true maxim, that "civil government and a defensive war will stand or fall together." Hence Jesus said, *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* Joh. 18. 36. Therefore the dignity of his government is maintained, not by carnal, but by spiritual weapons: and not by *reßsing*, but patiently bearing evil treatment. Hence when one of his chief officers was greatly abused he said, *Being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat: we are made the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day.* 1 Cor. 4. 12. 13. And the way in which the saints finally obtain victory over the dragon and his angels is, *by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony; and not loving their lives unto the death.* Rev. 12. 11.

I have been the more particular on these things, because the core of our difficulties lies here. And if the kind reader finds here but an imperfect description of the way of the churches acting upon truth, in distinction from all earthly powers, let him remember that this is a *high-way* that has been very much *unoccupied* in later ages, and men have gone in *by-ways*: but 'tis hoped that this *good old way* will speedily be opened so plainly that *fools shall not err therein*: and if this weak attempt may be owned as any means thereof, that will over-balance all the world's reproaches on that account. The confounding of civil and ecclesiastical affairs together has done amazing mischief in the world: and as Dr. Cotton Mather observes "The reforming churches flying from Rome, carried some of them more, some of them less, all of them something of Rome, with them, especially in that spirit of imposition and persecution, which has too much cleaved unto them all." This was the worst mistake that our fathers brought with them to this land; & tho' their posterity will generally explode those bitter *fruits*; yet few of them seem to be sensible of the *root* from whence they sprang. What our Lord said of serving two masters, may in some sense be applied to the joining of these two powers together; one or the other will carry the day, and they have each had their turns in our land. Under the old *Massachusetts*

*Massachusetts* charter, none could be so much as *freemen* in the state, till they were members of the church; and such as afterwards fell under church-censure were not allowed to sit in the court. And struggles on these points were a principal cause of loosing that charter. But now the scale is so far turned, that 'tis a professed rule with many ministers, not to deal with any person in the church for moral evil, 'till they are convicted in the state. A great turn indeed!

As nearness tends to beget likeness, so there have been several attempts made in our land, to establish various degrees of power in ecclesiastical, as there is in civil rule. This was tried for above sixty years ago in the *Massachusetts* province; but it was prevented there; yet Mr. *Saltonstall* who had quitted the pulpit in *New-London*, for the governors chair in *Connecticut* colony, brought in the scheme there soon after for a claficial power in each county, that men might appeal to, as they do from an inferior to a superior court! and after much contention it was established by law; only with this reserve, That as many as would, might dissent from it. My honoured grandfather, *Joseph Backus* Esq; with the other representative from *Norwich*, soon felt the effect of this new power; for as they had thought it duty to oppose it in the court, so they did also in the church. But Mr. *Woodward* the minister was resolute to bring in the scheme there, and got a majority on his side; therefore rather than come under such a yoke, they, with a considerable part of the church withdrew, and held a separate meeting three months; and then the minister consented to have the matter tried by a council, tho' in the mean time he had laid them under *church censure*; an account of which being conveyed to the general court, the representatives were not suffered to sit therein. Such were the early effects of this new power. However, after many councils and much fatigue, a sum of money prevailed with that minister to quit his place, \* and the church in *Norwich* resolved to continue upon their old platform.

These and such-like things prevented that new plan, called *Saybrook regulation*, from taking so deep effect as many intended it should; yet they obtained one great article of power thereby, which they have generally held ever since, and that is the *licencing of candidates for the ministry*.

\* And rarely can any society now, get rid of a bad minister, but by that means.

*stry*, and so limiting the churches to such in their choice of pastors. Yea this spiritual court has attempted to deprive churches of their pastors who were already in office : one notable instance whereof, I will mention. In the beginning of our glorious revival of religion in the land, *New-Haven* consociation made some laws against ministers preaching in others parishes, if they were desired to the contrary : \* soon after which, Mr. *Philemon Robbins* of *Branford*, (who was a great friend to that work of God) received a letter from the pastor of a *Baptist* church in *Wallingford*, which informed him that tho' they were of different sentiments about the *form* of religion, yet as they agreed in the *essentials*, they desired him to come and preach among them. This he thought to be a reasonable request, and therefore appointed a meeting among them in the beginning of the year 1742. But before the appointed time came, he received two letters, one from some of the inhabitants of that town, the other from some neighbouring ministers, which informed him that they did not think it would be for the best for him to preach among that people, and desired he would not ; but gave no reason at all. Yet because he would not put by a meeting which he had appointed merely at their request, without any reason given, he was first excluded from the *consociation*, and then complaints were received there against him, from a few of his disaffected people ; upon which he made an attempt to get reconciled again to the ministers, but found it could not be done upon any lower terms, than confessing that he did wrong in preaching to that *baptist* society as he did. That he could not in conscience do ; so they parted, which opened a wider door for complaints than before ; and so many were carried in, that a consociation was appointed in his own town to try the case, and a citation was sent to him to come and answer to many articles.

Hereupon Mr. *Robbins* called his church together, and laid these articles before them, with answers thereto ; and the church manifested satisfaction therewith : and as they found that the church was originally settled according to *Cambridge platform*, and had never voted an alteration ; they now voted to abide by their old constitution, and appointed Mr. *Robbins* and others to go and inform the consociation that they denied their jurisdiction, and would not be tried by them. This was accordingly done ; yet this

+ Laws of the same nature were soon after carried into the general court and passed there.



*Spiritual court* declared that they had jurisdiction of the case, and went on to hear and try charges against him, without any to answer for him; and drew up and published their judgment that "Mr. Robbins was criminally guilty of the breach of the *third* the *fifth* and *ninth* commands, and many gospel rules," and so warned all to beware of him, till he made satisfaction therefor. Mr. Robbins, having copies of these proceedings, published them to the world, in 1747. Afterward four of the inhabitants of *Branford* (if I remember right their number) went to the general court with a complaint that the town still held this condemned man for their minister, and prayed the court to turn him out of his place. This caused a great turn in the rulers minds; and I know not who will now appear to justify their conduct; and yet I fear there are but few who are convinced that the root of all this mischief lies in mans trying to model church affairs according to worldly rule. In civil states particular men are invested with authority to judge for the whole; but in Christ's kingdom each one has an equal right to judge for himself. Indeed there is a likeness in this respect that all politic bodies have their limits and their power extends only to those within their bounds; but then the limits of civil jurisdiction is fixed by earthly power, and that of the church is only by voluntary consent; for Christ will have no pressed soldiers in his army.

Paul said to the church of Corinth, *What have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among your selves that wicked person.* And after they had proceeded according to this direction, he calls it, *a punishment which was inflicted of many*, 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13. 2 Cor. 2. 6. Now Christ's church is either particular, or universal. All the churches that are described in the bible, as having the power of discipline are particular, in which each member has his right to judge; as in this at *Corinth*, another at *Ephesus*, &c. The affair recorded in Acts 15, is only of one particular church which sent to another for advice in a controversy concerning principles; and the *apostles and elders*, with the *whole church* returned an answer accordingly. But now when men assume a power above particular churches; as they have neither divine rule to support their conduct, nor earthly power

power to compel others to come to their aid, therefore they are obliged to act contrary both to scripture and reason. I have been thus particular, not to injure any man's person, but only to open the nature of that constitution in order to shew the true cause of our separation therefrom. It was observed long ago, that *facts* are *stubborn things*, and can't be altered to suit men's notions or interest: and having shewn from facts what the constitution of those called *standing churches* is, viz. that in general they are *national* or *provincial*, and in *Connecticut*, *classical*; I shall come on to open facts concerning our separation. \*

## PART II.

The cause and manner of our separation, with the particular points of difference between us and the standing ministers.

\*\*\* I Fully agree with Mr. *Fish*, that about 26 years ago, "There was the most wonderful work of God, that ever was known in this part of the world, both for the extent and visible appearance of it." p. 114. I am also of his mind, that "there was a marvellous mixture of almost every thing *good* and *bad*,—for while the spirit of God wrought powerfully, satan raged maliciously, and acted his old subtle part to *deceive*." p. 115. And several of his observations concerning Mr. *James Davenport* I believe are just, but others I think are not so.

He must be a great stranger to the bible, who does not know that in times of great declension, teachers are generally as much, if not the most corrupt of any; therefore in a reformation, those corruptions are always more or less exposed, and warned against. And when Mr. *Davenport* had his eyes opened to see the dreadful case of ministers as well as people, he having been trained up among ministers who claimed most of the power to themselves, was more easily led to the extrem, of openly declaring of his judgment concerning several ministers, and so of calling people

\* Mr. *Fish* treats of the *baptists* before the *separates*; but as that inverts the order wherein providence has carried on the work, I shall not follow him therein.

ple to separate from them, because *he judged them to be unconverted*. And a number of separations were produced by that means; but those separations were not from the general constitution of the churches; they were only from particular ministers. Whereas our separations began several years afterwards, and upon quite different principles; yet Mr. Fish would lay them all at his door, while he speaks highly of Mr. Gilbert Tennant, who travelled and preached in the most noted places in *New-England*, in the beginning of that work.

But did Mr. F. never see the sermon on the *danger of an unconverted ministry*, which that "son of thunder," as he calls him, published soon after, from Mar. 6. 34? wherein, after drawing the character of Pharisee-teachers, and shewing how people should be pitied, who have such teachers, he says, "If it be so,—then what a scrole and scene of mourning and lamentation, and wo is opened! because of the swarms of locusts, the crowds of Pharisees, that have as *covetously* as *cruelly*, crept into the ministry, in this adulterous generation! who as nearly resemble the character given of the old Pharisees, in the doctrinal part of this discourse, as one crow's egg does another. It is true some of the modern Pharisees have learned to prate a little more *orthodoxly* about the new birth, than their predecessor, *Nicodemus*, who are, in the mean time, as great strangers to the feeling experience of it, as he. They are blind who see not this to be the case of the *body* of the clergy, of this generation.— Alas! is not it the case of multitudes? If they can get one, that has the name of a minister, with a band, and a black coat or gown, to carry on a sabbath-days among them, altho' never so coldly and *insuccessfully*; if he is free from gross crimes in practice, and takes good care to keep at a distance from their consciences, and is never troubled about his *insuccessfulness*; O! think the poor fools, that is a fine man indeed." p. 11, 12. It must be confessed that his language is sharp and cutting, like *Luther's* formerly; yet many of his reasonings are weighty; of which at present I will only give two extracts more; one is in his answer to that complaint, that his principles will cause contentions among people; to which he says, "The proper cause of sinful divisions, is that enmity against God, and holiness, which is in the hearts of natural men, of every order; being stirred up by the devil, and their own proud and selfish lusts. And very



"often natural men which are the proper causes of the  
 "divisions aforesaid, are wont to deal with God's ser-  
 "vants, as *Potiphar's* wife did by *Joseph*; they lay all the  
 "blame of their own wickedness at their doors, and make  
 "a loud cry!" p. 16. The other extract is in answer to  
 a saying which we have often heard, viz. That 'tis a mere  
 fiction to tell of getting good when we go over the parish  
 line, because as they say, *we are out of God's way*.

To this Mr. *Tennant* answers, "That there are three  
 "monstrous ingredients in the objection, namely a begging  
 "of the question in debate, rash judging, and limiting of  
 "God." p. 18 They beg the question who suppose we  
 go out of God's way, because we go over man's line; and  
 how rash is it to judge that others get no good, only because  
 they don't go in their way? And such are much more in-  
 excusable than the *Jews* were, if they think to limit divine  
 blessings to any particular *house* or spot of ground. Now  
 Mr. *F.* ought to know that we read and considered these  
 things in those times, as well as what Mr. *Davenport* said:  
 yea, and so we did the writings of a divine of greater note  
 than either of these, who in those times said, "We that are  
 "ministers, by looking on this work, from year to year,  
 "with a displeased countenance shall effectually keep the  
 "sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of  
 "shepherds to them, by feeding them; and our people had  
 "a great deal better be without any settled minister at all,  
 "at such a day as this." \* And in the next page he ob-  
 serves that "The times of Christ's remarkably appearing,  
 "in behalf of his church, and to revive religion, and ad-  
 "vance his kingdom in the world, are often spoken in the  
 "prophecies of scripture, as times wherein he will remark-  
 "ably execute judgments on such ministers or shepherds,  
 "as don't feed the flock, but hinder their being fed, and  
 "so deliver his flock from them, as Jer. 23<sup>d</sup>. throughout,  
 "and Ezek. 34. &c."

These things we knew had much of reality in them, and  
 Mr. *F.* or his bretheren might as well undertake to prove,  
 that *deep waters* are good to drink, when they are *foul'd*  
 with *mud* and *dung*; or that it is good feeding in pastures  
 which are *all trodden down*, as to prove that a great part of  
 the preaching which we had in those days was *clear gospel*,  
 or good food for souls. Sheep which are not unruly, will  
 try hard to get food out of neighbouring pastures, rather  
 than starve in such barren places; and if they are *push'd*  
 and

\* Mr. *Edward's* thoughts on the work, 1742. p. 134.

and beat for it, that will scatter them abroad the more. And I speak as I expect to answer it before HIM who has said, he will judge between the fat and lean cattle. I know this to be a real cause of our separations : and the evidence of its being so, will more and more open as we go on.

The same views of a holy God, which gave many to see their woful polluted and undone condition, led them also to see that they dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Isa. 6. 5. And when any had a manifestation of Christ to their souls ; like the woman of Samaria, they wanted to invite all to come and partake of the same blessings ; but this gave offence to many, who would say, " You must not judge." But that was so far from preventing, that it naturally produced a judgment in young converts, that those who were offended at such free invitations, were strangers to vital religion : and doubtless many exceeded due bounds in that way ; yet to be more severely dealt with therefor, than others were for the vilest crimes, (as many were) this had no tendency to convince them that they were wrong, or their reprovers right.

Farther, such as had an appetite given them for the pure gospel, could not help seeking often to hear the *sincere milk of the word* ; and consequently to hear it from the clearest preachers, if they went a few miles further for it. They also frequently assembled themselves together, and exhorted one another, with mutual advantage ; 'till at length some were ready to say concerning some exhorters, much as the women sang concerning a youth in Israel, 1 Sam. 18. 7. To this Mr. F. bears me witness, p. 138. But great offence was taken at such things, and at length the ministers in general came into an agreement to try to stop them ; and now a great part of the preaching that was to be heard at home or abroad, was concerning *imprudencies and disorders*, and especially against, what they called, *lay-exhorting*. Our author owns that these things were frequently, and perhaps too often handled, p. 142. Yet because people would not patiently hear such preaching he says, " Sound doctrine was what they could not endure." Tho' I am glad he is so honest as to add, that he means " only such branches of doctrine, as took away (what he calls) *false notions* in religion ;—for, says he, as to many other sound doctrines, they relished them well." p. 163.

I am far from thinking that we were free from mistakes, and false notions in those times : *Who can understand all his errors ?*

But ministers ought to know that there is a vast difference between *living persons*, and a *dead image*, which the workman hews, or hammers into what shape he pleaseth: yet because we would not be cut and hammered into their shape, we have been treated as rebels ever since. Mr. Fish would have it, that when we turned from them, we set up teachers who were "exceeding raw and unskilful in the word of righteousness," p. 119, 170. Which may lead us to consider the particular grounds of our separation, and of the difference between us.

### I. Of judging others.

THIS has been much complained of in our day, and Mr. F. delivers high charges against us in that respect: but a calm view of his and others conduct on that head, might cause the same remark about *judging*, that bishop Burnet made concerning *persecution*, viz. that it look'd as if 'the only quarrel they had against it was, because they had not the managing of it themselves.' Our author tells a long story of how he and his brethren preached much better than the separates, but I suppose he had forgot that Paul durst not make himself of the number of such as *commended themselves, and measured themselves by themselves*.

So Dr. Chauncy, who wrote a great volume against the work 25 years ago, set down *rash and uncharitable judging* as one of the greatest evils of that day. And tho' he talks much of the scriptures, yet his evident standard is, *themselves*: for he says, "I freely confess, had the ministers of New-England lost their character as men of religion, by any deportment of themselves, contradictory to the gospel, I should have found no fault with any representation of them as *bad men*; nay, *dangerous enemies* to the kingdom of Christ: for I am clearly of the mind, that a *visibly wicked minister* is the greatest scandal to religion, and plague to the church of God: nor is it a hurt, but a real service to the cause of Christ, to expose the characters of such, and lessen their power to do mischief." \* Thus he allows that if there had happened to have been a number of visibly bad ministers among us, it

\* See Dr. Chauncy's Thoughts on the state of religion in New-England. 1743, p. 141.



would have been a *real service*, and not *hurt to expose them*. But he has judged it to be otherwise; therefore for others to judge the contrary, is a sure evidence of their being *rash and uncharitable men*!

The first whom he names, as guilty of this daring crime, is Mr. *Whitefield*; and he begins his evidence against him, with telling us that he "seldom preached, but he had something or other, in his sermon, against *unconverted ministers*"; and that afterward in his *journal* he expressed his fear lest "many, nay, the most that preach, do not experimentally know *Christ*." And to prove this to be an *abuse of the standing ministers now*, he says, "Hear the opinion of that eminent man of God Dr. *Cotton Mather* upon this head": † who said, "There is not that spot of ground upon the face of God's earth, which can proportionably match *New-England* for ministers." But when was it so? why I find by his *life*, that this opinion was published in 1691, when (as the following words express) "No man became a minister in these churches, till he first became a *communicant*; and no man became a communicant, until he had been *severely examined* about his *regeneration*, as well as his *conversation*. If any minister do misbehave himself, he soon hears of it, and becomes either a *penitent*, or a *deposed man*."

This was Dr. *Mather's* testimony of the order of the churches in that day; but "what a *degeneracy* has come on since then! This same man of God said 24 years afterward, "There may be much *chaff* in the church.—Now, his prophesied Mat. 3. 12. He whose *fan is in his hand*, will *thoroughly purge his floor*. But verily, it must be with more than a little *shaking* that the *fanning work* will be carried on." Again he says, "There shall be men, qualified like, and influenced by, the angels of God; these *Baanerges's*, and *sons of commotion*, shall fly thro' the midst of heaven, having this everlasting gospel to preach unto the inhabitants of the earth. And our glorious Lord will *shake heaven*, and *shake the earth*, and *shake all nations*, till this glorious gospel be comply'd with."

Here reader take notice, when a passage from that author seemed to suit Dr. *Chauncy's* turn, then he is an "eminent"  
 † Ibid p. 140, 141. † page 141.

Dr. *Mather's* Sermon from Hag. 2. 6, 7. in 1715. p. 35, 38.

"eminent men of God;" but in this now quoted, which so exactly agrees with the work which he opposed, see if Dr. M. escapes the charge of enthusiasm. The main objection which he advances against the work that was carried on under the ministry of those *sons of Thunder*, is that, "wherever it takes place, the subjects of it, too generally are uncharitable to neighbours, to brethren of the same community to relatives, to ministers in an especial manner."

That is, when their eyes were opened to see that they were men of *unclean lips*, they saw also that they dwelt in the midst of a people of *unclean lips*: and this caused "more than a little shaking in the churches." And as 'tis evident that Dr. C's notion of *charity* was, to have a good opinion of the ministers and churches, as they stood; so because the instruments and subjects of that work, had not such an opinion of them; therefore he judges of them as *enthusiasts*, *quakers*, and what not? See Rom. 2. Many ministers will not approve of this conduct in Dr. Chauncy, who yet treat us as he did them. Let us come to plain facts.

The first of our separate churches was at *Canterbury*; and the *separation* began in this manner. The *parish* called a man to preach to them, who had been *licensed* for that purpose, by the *association* in that county. But after the church in *Canterbury* had made trial of him, they judged him to be "destitute of those *essential* qualifications" that ought to be in a minister of Jesus Christ; and therefore refused to join with the society in their choice." And, as the society persisted in their choice, and were justified therein by the *ministers*, the church at length withdrew, and met at a private house. After which the *consecration* was called; and under their direction, a number of the members openly renounced the former principles of the church, and put themselves under *Saybrook* regulation, and chose Mr. Cogswell, whom the society had called before, and got him ordained as their minister. And they afterward, "sent some of the members of the church to prison, for not attending on his ministry; yea, and threatened to prosecute Mr. Buell for staying in the town to preach the gospel, upon the desire of many members of the church, without the vote of the society."

These and many other facts, Mr. Solomon Paine published 16 years ago, and appealed to courts, ministers and people for the truth of them; and I never heard any deny them to this day. Here reader is the plain state of our first

\* Dr. Chauncy's thoughts p. 170.

† Vid. Mr. Paine's view of the churches. 1751. 17, 18.

first separate church. It is the first church in *Canterbury*, who retain their ancient principles, their records, and other furniture of the church: and are called *separate*, only because they refused to give up their judgments to the clergy and the world, \* in so important an affair, as the choice of a guide for their souls. Indeed that association in their letter against the separates, p. 41, 42. say, "If there be any of us, whose ministry is not edifying, or who dispense not the word as we ought,—you ought to use the means which Christ has appointed for our conviction and amendment, or rejection." And they declare the churches have liberty "to choose their own way of church discipline, whether *Saybrook* platform, presbyterian or congregational." And yet in the next breath they accuse the separates with "rejecting the ministry and churches of Christ, and setting up without any divine institution." Whereas, the very act of this church, which they are condemned for, was adhering to the congregational plan, and taking the only gospel way they had left to clear themselves of a minister, whose preaching was not edifying to them.

I say the only gospel method they had left; for the church had called a congregational council before, and after he was ordained "against the vote and solemn warnings and intreaties of the church;—all the settled ministers of the county left the church":—and Mr. *Pain* "went to the general assembly in behalf of the church, with a petition, shewing them that the church was usurped over, and oppressed, and prayed them to interpose, and forbid the society", oppressing the church to support that minister: but the court granted them no relief. No, but for many years afterward, their goods were spoiled, or persons haled to prison for that minister's support; and after their own pastor was ordained, he was prosecuted, and fined for marrying a couple, because they would not allow him to be truly ordained.

Mr. *Fish* says, the qualifications of teachers, "are to be judged of by the ministers of Christ;—which trial *lay-teachers* refuse to submit to." p. 147. and quotes several texts, out of *Timothy* and *Titus* to prove it: whereas those epistles are to direct ministers concerning their behavior in the church, not over it. Our Lord commends the church of *Ephesus*, that they had tried them which said they were apostles,

\* I say the world; for the law requires no other qualification to make a voter in their parishes, but a certain quantity of worldly estate.

† Mr. *Pain*'s view of the churches page 17. & his preface p. 7.



apostles, and were not; and had found them liars, Rev. 2. 2. And the true apostles, while they gave to the first gospel church, a description of what sort of men should be chosen into office in their presence, they did not pretend to nominate any; but said, *Brethren, look ye out among you, such men.* Acts 6. 3. And Paul expressly shews, that letters of commendation in his time were To and from the church, 2 Cor. 3. 1.

But these ministers now, arrogate the power to try, and approve ministers, wholly to themselves; and assisted in causing a division in the church of Canterbury, because they would not submit to that power, contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, in the gospel. Here therefore, the text which they often cast upon us, is strictly applicable to them. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them: for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Rom. 16. 17, 18. They were as truly the cause of that division, as ever King Charles was, of beginning the civil war by invading the rights of the Parliament.

There was an early dispute among the apostles about greatness: but their master told them that if any man desired to be first, the same should be last of all, and servant of all. Whereupon John discovered how their ambition had operated: it had moved them to forbid one who was acting in Christ's name, because, says he, he followeth not us. Mar. 9. 35—38. Yet what now is the import of their noise against separates, but this, *They follow not us?* Our Lord repeatedly warned his disciples against assuming such a lordly power as civil rulers have, and said, *So shall it NOT BE among you.* Mar. 10. 43. Luk. 22. 26. And Peter exhorted elders not to be as lords over God's heritage. 1 Pet. 5. 3. But one of Mr. Fish's brethren, in the same county, \* who is a trustee of Yale college, asserts that the "Rights conveyed by the keys,—belonging to the eldership only, are as distinct from the right of private members, as the rights of a magistrate are from those of a freeman, in a civil community." And adds that, the express charge given them, "not to lord it over God's heritage, supposeth them to have such rights and powers above, over and distinct from, and independent of the church." Which assertions he would support with this notable argument,

gument, viz. " 'Tis not possible they should be in danger of *abusing* a power, they never had." To which I answer, that, if they can't *abuse* a power they never had; yet the experience of all ages proves, that they are prone to *assume* a power which Christ never granted: yea, which he has expressly *forbid*. If ministers would leave their worldly comparisons, and attend only to divine rule, I believe they would find that it belongs to the church with them to try ministers; and common people have the best advantage to know how men behave in their daily walk, and have as good right as any, to judge what *gifts* are edifying, and what *experiences* are clear. What then are those ministers doing, who assume the power to themselves to judge for the church, and to forbid all who *follow not them*? Indeed there is one qualification that is greatly set by, which common people are supposed not to be fit judges of. This brings me to speak,

## II. Of Learning.

UPON this Mr. F. advances a formal charge against us, and says "While we give the separate credit for this verbal concession, that *learning* is a good thing, and that they don't despise *learning*, we must charge them with saying, in the next breath and confirming of it by *practice*, that there is no need of any more than *common learning* (nor indeed any *necessity* for that, if they have but the *Spirit*) to qualify men for the work of the ministry. And accordingly they choose *unlearned* men, and have none but such for their *teachers*. Neither do they use the means for obtaining any better accomplishments; which shows that they make no account of *colleges*, and superior schools of learning to educate their sons." p. 165.

This you see is laid against us all without exception, and he often repeats it in that manner, and our *practice* is appealed to for the proof of the charge: then let that be examined.

F

Mr.

Vide Mr. George Beckwith of Lyme's second letter against lay-ordination, p. 58, 59. His first letter was dedicated to governor Filch, and then he compared ordination to the swearing a magistrate into his office, after the *freemen* had chosen him, p. 36. But before his second letter came out, the *freemen* had dropt

Mr. *Elisha Pain* of *Canterbury*, was one of the greatest lawyers in that colony, before he left the law for the gospel; and some of the ministers approved of his preaching, till they found he would not conform to their schemes; he is an ordain'd pastor among the separates to this day. His brother *Solomon*, who was the first pastor of that church at *Canterbury*, had been a leading man in the town, and had been their representative in the general court. Mr. *Josiah Cleaveland*, of that church sent two of his sons to college, and you shall hear how they were treated.

" *Yale college Nov. 19. 1744.*  
 " Present, the Rector and Tutors upon information,  
 " that *John Cleaveland*, and *Ebenezer Cleaveland*, members  
 " of this college, withdrew from the public worship of  
 " God in the meeting-house in *Canterbury*, carried on by  
 " Mr. *Cogshall* a licenced, and approved candidate for the  
 " ministry, preaching there at the desire of the first parish  
 " or society in *Canterbury*, with the special direction of the  
 " association of the county of *Windham*; and that they  
 " the said *Cleavelands*, did go to and attend upon a private  
 " separate meeting in a private house for divine worship, car-  
 " ried on principally by one *Solomon Paine*, a lay-exhorter, on  
 " several sabbaths in September or October last." The Schol-  
 " ars owned the facts, and gave in the state of the case to them,  
 " and shew'd that they met with the major part of the church,  
 " which they belonged to. I shall not trouble the reader with  
 " any more than the close of their first answer which was, " That  
 " neither the major part of the members in full communi-  
 " on, nor any other persons in any parish or society, have  
 " any right or warrant to appoint any house or place for  
 " worship

his patron, and several magistrates out of office for favouring the stamp-act. And what will he do now? for this comparison will by no means suit his turn? Why he slips over, and in his second letter compares power of ministers to that of the "governor of a province, by the King's commission," p. 42. This is a fine comparison indeed! for such a governor can negative councilors, and the acts of the general court: Yet by the way such power is too great to be conveyed by a long succession; if the governor dies, or is removed, the province must be without one till a new commission is granted, directly from the King; and the people have no choice in the affair. Thus Mr. B. by wandering from truth, has involved himself in a sad dilemma; for at home his governor is lett out of office by the people, and that power he would not allow the church; and abroad governors have commissions directly from the King; but he has no such thing to show.



" worship on the sabbath, distinct and separate from, and  
 " in opposition to the meeting-house, the public place ap-  
 " pointed by the general assembly, and the parish; but on  
 " the contrary, all such places and separate meetings, are  
 " prohibited by the antient laws of this government.  
 " Whereupon it is considered, and adjudged by the  
 " rector and tutors, that the said *John and Ebenezer*  
 " *Cleavelands*, in withdrawing and separating from the  
 " public worship of God, and attending upon the preach-  
 " ing of lay-exhorters as aforesaid, have acted contrary to  
 " the rules of the gospel, the laws of this colony, and  
 " of the college; and that the said *Cleavelands*, shall be  
 " publicly admonished for their faults aforesaid; and if  
 " they continue to justify themselves, and refuse to make  
 " an acknowledgment, they shall be expelled.  
 " Thomas Clap. Rector."

They were expelled accordingly, and became teachers  
 among the separates. And as the heads of the college then  
 published this account; and Mr. *Paine* in his *view of the*  
*churches*, transcribed it, p. 13—15, in 1752. And as we  
 have some other ordained pastors, who have considerable  
 skill in both the *Greek* and *Latin* tongues; and three mem-  
 bers of one separate church in *Norwich*, have each brought  
 up a son at college within these few years, one of which is  
 now a tutor of *Yale* college; and as a like number have been  
 sent to college from *Windham*, beside some in other places;  
 I leave Mr. *Fish* to consider how he can answer what he  
 has said, either to God or man.

However, tho' his charge is far from truth, yet 'tis read-  
 ly granted, that we have a great dislike to some sorts of learn-  
 ing, especially the art of disputing against the truth, as  
 well as for it, the art of making easy things hard, instead  
 of making hard things easy; such *oppositions of science*, we  
 have no likening to, nor of the art of handling the word of  
 God deceitfully, and twisting things into any shape to suit men's  
 own turns. Such things as these, I take to be the *leaven*  
 which our Savior warned his disciples against; for what he  
 calls *doctrine* in one place, he calls *hypocrisy* in another. †  
 And what shall we think of our author upon this point?  
 Speaking of ministers work, he says, "Our Lord hath shewn  
 us, that LEARNING is eminently useful, yea even necessa-  
 ry, *Isai. 50. 4. The Lord God hath given me the tongue*  
*of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word*

F 2

† 1 Tim. 6. 20 † Mat. 16. 12. Luk. 12. 2.

"in season, to him that is weary. Intimating that he should not have known how, without a learned tongue." p. 175.

When I read this, I confess it caused this enquiry in my mind, If Mr. *Fish* knows no better, than to construe this scripture so, where is his *learning*? and if he does, where is his *honesty*? His controversy with us is about *human* learning, whereas that text expresseth *divine* learning, as plain as words can possibly do; and there is great reason to think, that the prophet here personates *him*, who tho' *he were a son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered, and being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted*. Did any Pharisee ever abuse scripture, to impose upon people, worse than this?

Let us consider another scripture, namely, 2 Tim. 3: 6. which our author gives us a large comment upon, in order to guard against those that oppose their churches, and closeth it by saying, "This design is hid from vulgar eyes, by the plausible covering or pretence, of setting truth in a clearer light, and building up the church on a better footing, and of purer materials," p. 70. Now we may take notice, that the apostle makes no distinction in the text, between *public* and *private* houses, for he often taught both *publicly* and *from house to house*; but what he points out false teachers by, is, the manner of their getting in, and the work they do when they are in. As to the first, they *creep into houses*: and we all know that *creeping* is opposite to going *upright*, therefore when Peter *dissembled*, Paul withstood him *to the face*, because he *walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel*; and that concerning introducing the *Jewish* schemes into the *christian* church, Gal. 3: 11—14. I leave Mr. *F.* to consider how well this will agree with his notion, that the "christian church is made up of the *same materials*, that the *Jewish* church was."

I remember that Mr. *Edwards* in his *farewell sermon* at *Northampton*, warned that people of their danger of being imposed upon, for he said, he knew the *art* that some young ministers had got, of *disguising* their principles, till they could get into place, and then they would corrupt people's minds by degrees. This leads to the other branch of the text under consideration, which is, that when those teachers are got into houses, they *lead captive silly women laden with sin, led away with divers lusts*. And how many have there been in our day, who have appeared in a *Galilean* garb till they have got settled, and then as fast as any

any *women* or others came *laden with sin*, to talk with them about their souls concern, they would lead them to the church, instead of leading them to *Christ first*, and so they are settled down in a *form of Godliness*; and this sort of men, will soon deny the power of it. verse. 5. And they are ever *learning*, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, v. 7. Instead of that, they are *truce-breakers*; false to the principles which they professed, and break thro' their solemnities and engagements; and so are *Traitors*, v. 4. And if we had no such men in our land, can it be thought, that we should have heard *Judas* cried up so much as we have? I mean not to reflect upon any man's person, but only to hold up the plain truth, and leave all men to judge for themselves; and where any such men are found, God's command in ver. 5. is, *From such turn away*. Mr. F. pretends, that those teachers were for building the church, "of purer materials" than others; whereas the text speaks expressly of *that sort of men*, who have the form, but deny the *power of godliness*.

This leads us to another article of difference between us, which is,

### III. The Nature and Power of the Spirit.

OUR author's last and most distinguishing character of the true church is, that, "Christ's church has always had, and always will have, his holy spirit dwelling in it." p. 44. This spirit he says, "has always been distinguished from the spirit of antichrist, by his *purity, meekness, gentleness, and patience*. The true church of Christ, in whom his spirit dwells, has never been a *bitter, fierce, revengeful, persecuting church*, but the reverse. What ever degree of such a spirit, has at any time crept into his church, so far as to influence some individuals, it has ever been a blemish to her character,—been disowned by Christ and his church, condemned and exploded." p. 47. To this I say, *amen* with all my heart; by this let the controversy be decided; in order to which, other facts must be laid open.

It has been already observed, that we agree in judgment, concerning there having been a most glorious out-pouring of the spirit in our day, for the conviction and conversion of many souls: but I think the same spirit led us to see the corruptions



ruptions of the ministers and churches, so as to leave them, while Mr. F. holds the contrary. Here we part, and I have laid open the state of our first separate church, and a little of the treatment they met with, from the other party. Now we will proceed further. Tho' we had diverse separate meetings, yet 'twas more than a year after the breach at *Canterbury*, before we had any new church gathered, and many were in hopes that ministers would come to better terms, but their hopes were disappointed, for none were allowed to preach, without the ministers licence ; and I will here insert their own account, how one of our teachers was treated, by the *authority* which these churches stand upon, and leave others to judge what spirit it discovered. Omitting the introduction, the charge was, \*

" That *Elisba Paine* of *Canterbury*, in the county of  
 " *Windham*, who is not a settled, and ordained minister,  
 " did on the 10th day of *April*, A. D. 1744. go into the  
 " third parish in *Windham*, in the county aforesaid ; and  
 " in said parish, in the house of *Benjamin Cleaveland*, there  
 " said *Paine* did publickly preach, and exhort in matters  
 " of religion, both as to doctrine and practice, to a great  
 " number of people then present, that were notified many  
 " days before the said *Paine* was to preach at said *Cleaveland's*  
 " house, as before mentioned, as by presentment  
 " on file may appear. The said *Paine* confessed the facts,  
 " and pleaded, this court hath no jurisdiction of this  
 " case, as on file. †

" This court having considered the pleas of the prisoner, do judge them insufficient, and say, That this court hath jurisdiction of this case, and the said *Paine* refused to make any other plea : whereupon it is considered by this court, that the said *Elisba Paine* shall become bound, to the treasurer of the county of *Windham*,

\* *Paine's view of the churches*, p. 20—22.

† " *Windham*, ff. Sept. 22. 1744. a justices court."

Present, Nathanael Huntington, justice of peace.

" And now the prisoner at the bar, being brought before this court, for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, and exhorting a number of people ( as presentment ) pleads, that this court hath not jurisdiction of this case ; for that the facts complained of, are warranted by the law of God and the King, and therefore not tryable by any court, or law inferior thereto ; and this he is ready to verify judgment.

" The above written is a true copy, *Elisba Pain* as on file."

Test. N. Huntington, justice of peace.

" *ham*, in a recognizance of one hundred pound lawful  
 " money, to his peaceable and good behavior; that he  
 " the said *Paine*, will not again offend in the like kind,  
 " between this time, and the sitting of the county court,  
 " to be holden at *Windham*, in and for the county of *Wind-*  
 " *ham*, on the second Tuesday of December next, and  
 " then appear at said court, on said day, and take up  
 " his bond, unless the court shall see cause to continue  
 " the same, and pay cost of this prosecution, and stand  
 " committed until bond is given. Cost allowed, *two*  
 " *pounds thirteen shillings, old tenor bills*. The said *Paine*  
 " refused to give bond as above-mentioned, or any ways  
 " to comply with the judgment, and was committed the  
 " day and year above-written."

Nathanael Huntington, Just. peace,

" The above-written, is a true copy, as on record."

" Test. N. Huntington, Just. peace."

I shall only just desire the reader to observe, that there  
 appears nothing wanting here, to make him a good preacher,  
 but only the ministers licence, for he *preach'd* and *exhored*,  
 both in a *doctrinal* and *practical* way; and who could think  
 that such treatment from the other parties, could convince  
 us that we were wrong, and they right? It was far from  
 doing it; but on the other hand, it convinced us that they  
 had turn'd so far out of the gospel line, that we ought  
 not to follow them.

And on Oct. 9. 1745. A new separate church in *Mans-*  
*field* was gathered, and they made choice of Mr. *Thomas*  
*Marsh* for their pastor, who had for many years been a  
 deacon in the second church in *Windham*; and they ap-  
 pointed his ordination to be on Jan. 6. 1746. But the  
 day before, many of the standing ministers met in that  
 town, and at the same time Mr. *Marsh* was seized by an  
 officer, and carried to *Windham* Goal, for preaching some-  
 time before, without licence from the ministers; and on  
 the day proposed for his ordination, as a great assembly  
 were engag'd in religious worship, there came up a dozen  
 or fourteen ministers, and desired a conference with this  
 new church; hoping likely that now the *shepherd* was ta-  
 ken, they might scatter the *sheep*. What they talked of,  
 was to try to convince them of their errors; but when they  
 had begun with that old argument, "Take him Goaler!"  
 that powerful argument upon the *body*; what free access  
 could they rationally expect after that, to convince the  
 mind? They complained afterward, of meeting with *noisy*  
*treatment*, and who could expect less? The

The writer of this, happened to be a spectator of the transactions of that day, and tho' but young in years, and experience, yet he endeavoured carefully to observe what was done. Some of those ministers had been as great promoters, and others as great opposers of the late revival of religion, as any in the land; and the promoters of the work were put forward, and as they came up, they were saluted something in this manner, viz. one would say, "Dear Mr. P. you was the instrument of my conversion, and where are you now?" Another, "Dear Mr. M. you was the means of awakning my soul, and will you now fight against the work of God," and others to like purpose. And afterward they were publickly addressed by one of the fathers in the separation, \* as near as I can remember, in these words, "You dear ministers of Jesus Christ, who were as *heralds* a few years ago, to sound the gospel trumpet thro' the land; where are you now? are you not joined in *confederacy* with those who, your own consciences testify, are enemies to the work of God?"

They shewed no disposition to answer such questions; but made several attempts to get the church together by themselves, 'till they found it could not be done, and at last they read off a remonstrance, which they had drawn up against these things, and so departed. That church in *Mansfield*, the next month, chose and ordained Mr. *John Hovey* for their pastor, which was the first ordination among these churches; and after Mr. *Marsh* was set at liberty, he was ordained a colleague with him, in July following. The third separate ordination, was of Mr. *Solomon Paine* at *Canterbury*, Sept. 10. 1746. and there were five more such ordinations before that year was out; one of which was near Mr. *F.* at *Stonington*; and he gives a long story of his own behavior, and of the treatment he met with, upon that occasion; in order to shew how bad the spirit of separation was, p. 156. &c.

I would always abide by what we begun upon, under this head; that the spirit of Christ is not a *ferce*, *bitter*, and *revengeful* spirit, but the reverse; and that wherever such a spirit appears, 'tis a *blemish* to any people; and that treatment which he describes was so to us; but then he, and all ought to consider, that *Solomon* says, *surely oppression maketh a wise man mad*; and if what we had met with was not *oppression*, I confess I know not what may be called so; and the *bitter* words which he sets down, were utter-



ed by a poor *Irishman*, who could not read, and was never set up as a teacher among our churches, but put himself forward at that time; and if others did not then rebuke him for it, what has been said above, may in some measure account for that.

Mr. F. owns, that there is a great alteration among us since, and says, " 'Tis readily granted that they are, now much more moderate and civil, than they were in that day, — are very peaceable, kind, obliging good neighbours. But, says he, " what does this reasoning argue? " why, it only shews that they have lost a degree of their original *spirit* as *separates*." p. 158. But stay; our author has forgot himself: As little learning as we have, we used to think, that we understood so much of *logic* as this, that if the *cause* was gone, the *effect* would cease: therefore if so great a degree of the *spirit* of separation is lost, he need not have troubled himself, nor others about it. But he has drawn out things, to such a length, that he will have hard work to bring his two ends together; for he begins with informing the world, that the occasion of his writing, was the *revival* of the *spirit* of separation, yet before he has got thro' his book, he contradicts it, lest he should allow that we were governed by a good spirit in separating.

He calls this labour of his, An " unpleasant task"; and well he might, for 'tis hard work to strive to blind the truth. In order to finish this task, he says; " The rashness and severity of that spirit, which these poor brethren were influenced by, appeared in such accusations, as respected the hidden man of the heart," p. 159.

This brings me to speak,

#### IV. Of knowing Christians.

WHEN we first appeared against having the worthy, and the unworthy partake together at the Lord's supper, ( which was a principal reason of our fathers separation from the Church of England ) ministers told us, as I have before proved, that *tares* and *wheat* must grow together in the church, 'till the harvest: for they knew there were many both in public and private stations, who, notwithstanding their *form* of godliness, appeared as plainly against the power of it, as the *tares* appeared by their *fruit* in the field. But

because we would not confound church and world together, as they did, they shifted about, and accused us with assuming God's prerogative to search the heart; while they asserted, that we could not know who were saints, and who not. And when 'twas reply'd, that Christ said, *ye shall know them*: the return would often be, What, are you infallible? Whereupon disputes have ensued, which have often been carried to extremes on both hands. I confess with shame that I have sometimes been thus insnared; and so have given occasion to those who desired occasion against us.

And doubtless confidence has been carried beyond evidence, in many instances; and I suppose many have been more concerned to keep up a good opinion of such as they have received for christians, than they have to discharge their duty towards them in a gospel manner. And who will say he is clear of fault in these things? May all strive for greater reformation in them. But what is this writer doing, when he often charges us with *wilfulness* in our way? and because we were not turned back by Mr. Davenport's retractions he says, "They held fast deceit, they refused to return." p. 128. Again, he says, "The strength of their *delusion* seems to lie very much in this; that they cannot call their conduct in question." p. 136. This is the man who accuseth separates, with judging others' hearts! See Rom. 2. 1-3.

Mr. F. knows that our chief disputes, have been upon *visibilities* and not secrets. The first thing which he advances, to prove that separates had a bad spirit, is that, "They endeavoured to draw off from us, every true believer, or christian, (in their sense of the word) and would have left a congregation behind them, of nothing but such as they judged to be hypocrites and graceless persons: without the benefit of one saint to assist them, in the affairs of their souls."

And he directly turns to the parable of the *tares*, as a sure proof that this was wrong; and adds, as a great aggravation of their crime, that they would call others to, "Come out from among them, and be separate; with this reflection, "If they are christians, why don't they come away from the Shades of *Babylon*!" p. 154. I suppose the use of the word *Babylon* here, was thought as criminal as any of their language; but as its signification is, *confusion or mixture*, is there not at least the shades of it, where civil and ecclesiastical affairs; church and world are

*confounded*

confounded together, as we have proved they are in our land & the text refer'd to, is a call to come out from, and not be *unequally yoked with unbelievers*, 2 Cor. 6. 14—17. Creatures that are *unequally yoked* together, are not like to work to any advantage.

Old Mr. Mitcheſel's thoughts are worthy of \* notice here, which were thus expreſſed ; " The over-enlarging of full communion of, or admiſſion of perſons there, upon ſlight qualifications, without *inſiſting* upon the *practical* and *ſpiritual* part of religion, will not only loſe the power of godlineſs, but in a little time, bring in profaneſs, and ruin the churches theſe two ways. 1. Election of miniſters, will ſoon be carried by a formal, looſer to t. 2. The exerciſe of diſcipline, will by this means be rendered *impoſſible*, diſcipline falling, profaneſs riſeth like a flood ; for the major part, wanting zeal againſt ſin, will ſofter licentiouſneſs. It is not ſetting down good rules, and directions, that will ſalve it ; for the ſpecification of government, is from men, not from laws. Let never ſo good a form of government be agreed upon, it will ſoon degenerate, if the inſtruments, (or men) that manage it, be not good." Solomon tells us that words *ſilly ſpoken*, are like apples of gold, in pictures of ſilver : and I think theſe words of Mr. Mitcheſel are ſuch ; and as Mr. Fiſh often refers us to this godly man ; I would deſire him to turn and look into this glaſs himſelf. If this great man thought, that it would ruin the churches, to have many looſe members to vote for miniſters in the church ; what would he have ſaid, if he had ſeen the clergy ſet up the world over the church in that affair ? as we have ſeen them do, which cauſed the firſt ſeparation. I ſay ſet up the world over the church ; for the law requires no other qualification to make a man a voter for a miniſter in their pariſhes, but a certain quantity of worldly eſtate : and ſuch voters turned the church in Canterbury out of the meeting-houſe ; and then two members of it, becauſe they would go with the church, without the camp of ſuch men, they were turned out of one of the fountains, which Mr. F. would confine us all to for miniſters. This is not a judging men's ſecrets, for they are open facts in the ſight of the ſun. But what a ſpirit does our author diſcover, in his reproaching and condemning us, as apoſtates from the ſentiments of our antient fathers ? He ſpends ſeveral pages to try to prove, that the antient church at Plymouth was like



like the standing church now, and not like the separates, from an account of that church, which is given in the appendix to Mr. Robbins's ordination sermon; and after picking out a few passages, which are chiefly the opinion of the writer of the account, now in the year 1760, he then refers it to the reader to judge how little *resemblance* there is between them and us, p. 84. But in that same account, p. 32. we are informed, that the "church managed the whole affair, both of inviting and calling" ministers, and that the first instance that appears of the *towns voting* in the case, was *seventy nine years* after their first coming to *Plymouth*. In the same account p. 21. we have an information of *three* members of that church, who were ordained to the pastoral care of other churches \* that were, what Mr. F. calls *lay-teachers*; yet this was done *fifty-six years* after *Harvard college* was founded.

We don't pretend to take those fathers as our perfect pattern; but what I complain of is, Mr. Fiss's pretending to produce their example to support his cause, and to condemn us, and then call others to judge upon the case, while he conceals these material points, which are for us, and against him. I will also add here, that Mr. Prince gives it as the foundation principles of those fathers which came to *Plymouth*, that their church officers after "being chosen and ordained, have no *lordly, arbitrary or imposing power*; but can only rule and minister *with the consent of the brethren*; who ought not in contempt to be called the *laity* but to be treated as *men and brethren* in Christ, not as slaves or minors. And that no churches or church officers whatever have any power over any other church or officers, to controul or impose upon them: but are equal in their rights and privileges, and ought to be *independent* in the exercise and enjoyments of them." † Yet now these men who pretend to be their successors, have got so high an opinion of their own learning and knowledge, as to assume such a power as our fathers abhorred.

Is not he a *servant* who has not liberty to act as he thinks best, without leave from another? Yet such a power is now

\* Viz. Mr. Jonathan Dunham at Marthas Vineyard; Mr. Samuel Fuller, the first minister in Middleborough; and Mr. Isaac Cushman the first in Plymton. Mr. Cushman lived to old age, and I have heard many that have sat under his ministry speak of him as a faithful and successful labourer.

† New-England chronology, p. 92.

now claimed by ministers over their people, as not to allow them to have liberty to ask any minister to preach in their parish without their leave; and nothing is more common, than for them to call all such, *lay men*, which are not introduced into the ministry in their way. Our author is abundant in it, and Mr. *Beckwith*, who as I observed a little back, claims a *lordly* power in plain words, he uses the *lay* terms about 30 times in thirty pages. \* And is not he a *minor*, who must have another to act for him, and he only yield a *silent* consent thereto? and how near to this is the custom of our land, concerning admissions into churches? I observed before, that I never knew a single instance in the standing churches, of any members being received upon a verbal declaration to the church, of what *God hath done for his soul*; no, instead of that, the ministers have assumed more to themselves in that respect, than the judges do in our civil courts; for there they ordinarily insist upon having the *witnesses personally present*, where all persons concerned, may hear their testimony from their *own mouths*, and have liberty to ask what questions they think proper; the fear of witnesses blundering in their story, shall not excuse them from giving their *own* account, even before great

Many people love to have it so; Therefore that apostolic man (as Dr. Watts call him) professor Franck, after exposing many excuses for the fear of man, says, "To which may be added that pernicious distinction, derived from Popery, and whereby those that are preachers, or designed for that office, are called spiritual men, and the rest of the people lay men: whereas indeed all true christians be they in what state they will, must be spiritually minded, as St. Paul teacheth, 1 Cor. 3. 16. Rom. 8. 9, 14.—But we don't think of this, and scarcely know, what the name christian imports, viz. one anointed with the spirit of Christ; and therefore think our selves sufficiently excused; when we can say: I am a layick, and no spiritual man. It is not to be expressed, what horrid mischief this wicked distinction is the cause of, and what deep root it hath taken in men's minds: insomuch, that the devil himself could hardly have found out a better way, to persuade people, that one is not as much bound as another, exactly to order his life in all things according to the rule of God's word. Accordingly Satan fails not presently to shew his claws, whenever this spiritual priestly office, commended to all christians, is earnestly pressed and inculcated. Thou shalt in any wise re-buke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him, says God, Lev. 19, 17. Not to teachers alone, but to all in general." These were the sentiments of one of the greatest reformers in Germany near seventy years ago, see *Fear of man*. page 115—117.

men ; for *interest* is concerned, and they are afraid, *written* evidences would impose upon them : Yet in this case, where the *interest* of Christ's church is so much concerned, that as Mr. *Mitchel* observes *loose admissions* will ruin the churches ; here none are allowed to *witness* a good confession with their own mouths before the church, but the ministers have turned them off with *written* accounts, which have often been framed by some body else, for those who are about to make an open appearance as God's *witnesses*. Nay there are some godly persons among us, who declare that when they were admitted publickly into the church, the minister read off an account, different in material points, from what they gave to him in writing, and so made them silently assent to a *lie* !

From written experiences, great numbers, especially in populous places, have now dropt giving any account thereof to the church in any way : and yet these ministers would fain make us believe they are going in the same way which our fathers set out in, when they first came to this country : but let us hear their own testimony in the affair.

Capt. *Roger Clap*, one of the first inhabitants of *Dorchester*, and who was many years captain of the castle in *Boston* harbour ; he in writing of what they went thro' says, " I took notice of it, as a great favour of God unto me, not only to preserve my life, but to give me content-  
edness in all these straits : insomuch that I do not remember that ever I did wish in my heart, that I had not come into this country. — The Lord Jesus Christ was so plainly held out in the preaching of the gospel unto poor lost sinners, and the absolute necessity of the new-  
birth, and God's holy spirit in those days, was pleased to accompany the word with such efficacy upon the hearts of many ; that our hearts were taken off from old  
England, and set upon heaven. — Many were converted, and others established in believing, many joined unto the several churches where they lived, confessing their faith publickly, and shewing before all the assembly their experiences of the workings of God's spirit in their hearts to bring them to Christ ; which many hearers found very much good by, to help them to try their own hearts, and to consider how it was with them ; — oh the many tears that have been shed in *Dorchester* meeting-house at such times, both by those that have declared God's work on their souls, and also by those that heard them. In those days, God, even our own God did bless New-  
England



England. Christian history Vol. I. p. 72. You may take notice that this was their practice in the several churches where people lived.

Accordingly old Mr. John Eliot of Roxbury said, "It is matter of great thankfulness, that we have Christ confessed in our churches; by such as we receive to full communion there. They open the work of Christ in their hearts, and the relation thereof is an eminent confession of our Lord; experienced saints, can gather more than a little from it. It is indeed an ordinance of wonderful benefit; the Lord planted many vineyards in the first settlement of this country, and there were many noble vines in them; it was their heavenly-mindedness which disposed them to this exercise, and by the upholding of it, the churches are still filled with noble vines; it mightily maintains purity of churches: 'tis the duty of EVERY Christian. It is a thing that gives great glory to the Lord Jesus Christ; and young converts are thereby exceedingly edified; and the souls of devout christians are hereby ingratiated one unto another. The devil knows what he does when he thrusts so hard to get this custom out of our churches. For my part, I would say in this case, get thee behind me satan; thou givest an horrible offence unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us keep up this ordinance with all gentleness; and where we see the least spark of grace held forth, let us prize it more than all the wit in the world." \* This was the testimony of one of the most faithful and successful ministers that New-England ever saw; wherein he boldly ascribes to the devil any attempts that were made to thrust that custom out of the churches: yet now that custom is treated with contempt by many ministers, who still would be accounted the true successors of those pious fathers.

Indeed our author has got a fine way to get along here, which is by turning off such things for imperfections, and he says the order of the churches "was more perfected and established afterwards in the year 1662." p. 80. Here we shall learn what his notion of perfection is; for in that year was the synod which brought in (what we have called) half way members. Mr. Chauncy president of the college, and Mr. Davenport of New-Haven, both opposed that point in print, as a great corruption instead of perfection; and Mr. Eleazer Mather of Northampton, who

who was in that synod, wrote soon after to Mr. Davenport that, "There was scarce any of the congregational principles but what were layen at by some or other of the assembly: as relations of the work of grace, power of voting of the fraternity (or brethren) in admission," &c.

Mr. F's notion of the order of the churches being *persecuted* then, makes me think of a story concerning a minister who descended from a member of that synod, who tho' his conduct was not good, yet boasted of treading in his grandfather's steps; whereupon another minister of greater note said, "He had got his grandfather's *imperfections* to *perfection*." Though Mr. Mitchel was then active in bringing in what he called the *middle-way*; Yet the importance of being careful how persons were admitted to the Lord's-supper, still lay upon his mind, and he wrote his tho'ts thereon on Jan. 4. 1664. Wherein, among other things, he brings in this objection, viz. Why may it not "suffice, for a man publicly to say, *I believe on Christ, or do unfeignedly repent of my sins?* Or to consent to such expressions being read, or propounded unto him, without any more adoe?" His answer is "1<sup>st</sup>. He that can *groundedly* so say, or profess before God, angels, and men that he *hath* unfeigned faith and repentance, can say somewhat more, particularly to shew the reality of his acquaintance with those things. And if he cannot say it, *groundedly*, it is not meet to put him so to say. 2<sup>d</sup>. He that either *cannot* or *will not* say any more than so, he renders the truth of his faith and repentance, suspicious so that a *rational* charity, cannot acquiesce in it." †

There has been a great deal of smother raised in our day to hide or get over these self evident truths, many have been for lowering the profession so that it might not imply saving faith in it; but Zion's king says *He that is not for me is against me*; and he declares that *publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before those who said, I go sir; and went not*. Halting between two opinions; a pretending to be for God, and yet not being truly so, has always been one of the greatest evils, and most fatal snares that any men can be taken in. And as to the noise which many have made against our principles as tho' they tended

\* Mr Hutchinson's history vol 1. p. 224.

† Mr. Mitchel's life. p. 86.

to perplex sincere minds; this argument has justly been retorted back again: for none will pretend to admit persons without some sort of qualification or other: and 'tis vastly more difficult to determine the point concerning *moral* sincerity, than *gracious* sincerity; for the first is only restraints and influences upon a person, while the other is a living principle within him; and I think this is an unanswerable reason which Mr. Edwards gives, why the latter, and not the other, must meet members for Christ's Church, namely that moral sincerity is *transient*, and may be intirely lost; but a gracious principle *abides* for ever. As to the frightful consequence which some draw, that if none but gracious persons ought to be received to communion, then we can never know whether our communion is right or not, in this world: Old Mr. Shephard gave a sufficient answer thereto an 120 years ago, in these words.

“Q. What members ought every particular visible church to consist of?”

“A. Christ being head of every particular church, and it his body, hence none are to be members of the church, but such as are members of Christ by faith, 1 Cor. 1. 2. 1 Thes. 1.”

“Q. But do not hypocrites, and no true members of Christ creep in?”

“A. Yes: But if they could have been known to be such they ought to be kept out; and when they are known, they are orderly to be cast out. Mat. 25. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Rev. 2. 20. Tit. 3. 10.”

I have been the more particular on this head, because all the controversy turns very much upon it, and since Mr. F. says the separates “admitted members not so much upon outward evidence, as upon inward fellowship or feeling.” p. 145. I will add a little more concerning that matter: and I doubt not but many have had confused notions concerning fellowship, and have often put the effect for the cause, i. e. have taken what they felt towards others, for the evidence of others good estate; whereas all affections toward others, are caused by what is some way or other manifested from them; and if what others manifest be genuine evidences of grace, then our love thereto is genuine; but if what others manifest is not genuine language or exercises, and we are delighted therewith, those affections in us are as corrupt as the causes which produced them; hence Jesus says, *First cast out the beam out of thine*

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\* His first principles of the oracles of God. p. 25, 26.



own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brethren's eyes. And this the word, feeling is often cast upon us as a term of reproach, yet as certain as the bible is true, all those professors that don't love one another with a pure heart, have but the dead carcase of religion. And as a principal means of begetting and increasing this love, is declaring to each other what God has done for our souls; so our Lord says, Every tree is known by his own fruit, — a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good: And the beloved disciple says, That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, &c. And to shew that our sentiments are not singular, as well as for the edification of the saints, I will here transcribe a little of what was wrote in the last century, by one who is allow'd to be a man of as great learning and piety as any in his day, vizt. *Samuel Johnson*; who, after observing how men are liable to mistakes in various ways, and giving cautions accordingly, he proceeds to speak of some duties which can't be performed without some knowledge of others' state, and also of the way wherein it is attained. 1<sup>st</sup>, There are, says he, "many duties incumbent on us to be performed, with and towards professors, which without admitting a judgment to be made of their state and condition, cannot be performed in faith. And in reference unto these duties alone, it is that we are called to judge the state of others. For we are not giving countenance unto a rash uncharitable censuring of men's spiritual conditions, nor unto any judging of any men, any other than what our own duty towards them doth indispensably require. Thus if we are to lay down our lives for the brethren, it is very meet that we should so far know them so to be, as that we may hazard our lives in faith when we are called thereunto. We are also to join with them in those ordinances wherein we make a solemn profession, that we are members of the same body with them, that we have the same head, the same faith and love: we must love them because they are begotten of God, children of our heavenly father; and therefore must on some good ground believe them so to be. In a word, the due performance of all principal mutual gospel duties, to the glory of God, and our own edification, depend upon this supposition, that we may have such satisfying persuasion concerning the

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the spiritual condition of others, as that from which we may  
 take our aim in what we do. For the ground hereof, I shall mention one only,  
 in which all others do lean upon. This is pressed, 1 Cor.  
 12. 13, 14. As the body is one, and hath many mem-  
 bers, and all the members of that one body being many,  
 are one body, so is Christ; for by one spirit we are all bapti-  
 zed into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether  
 we be bond or free, and have been made all to drink into one  
 spirit. They are all united unto, and hold of one head;  
 so is Christ mystical, that is, all believers under Christ  
 to their head. And this union they have by the inhabi-  
 tation of the same quickning Spirit, which is in Christ  
 to their head, and by him they are all brought into the  
 same spiritual life and frame; they are made to drink  
 into one and the same spirit; for this same spirit pro-  
 duceth the same effects in them all, the same in kind,  
 though differing in degrees, as the apostle fully declares  
 in Eph. 2. 13. And this spirit is in them, and not in  
 the world, Joh. 16. And as it gives them a naturalness  
 of in their duties one towards another, or in mutual scarifi-  
 cing for, rejoicing and sorrowing with one another, as mem-  
 bers one of another. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26. So that it  
 reveals and discovers them to each other, so far as is  
 necessary for the performance of the duties mentioned,  
 in such a manner as becomes members of the same body.  
 There is on this account a spiritually natural answering of  
 one to another, as face answereth face in the water, they  
 can see and discern that in others whereof they have expe-  
 riences in themselves, they taste and relish that in others  
 which they feed upon in themselves, and wherein the  
 lives of their souls do consist; the same spirit of life be-  
 ing in them, they have the same spiritual taste and fa-  
 vor. And unless their palates are disordered by tem-  
 ptation or false opinion or prejudices, they can in their  
 communion taste of that spirit in each other, which they  
 are all made to drink into. This gives them the same  
 likeness and image in the inward man, the same heavenly  
 light in their minds, the same affections; and being  
 thus prepared to judge and discern of the states of each  
 other, in reference unto their mutual duties, they have  
 moreover the true rule of the word to judge of all spirits  
 and spiritual effects by. And this is the ground of all  
 that love without dissimulation, and real communion

that is among the saints of God in this world. If these are omitted, there is an end of all profitable use of church society. Churches without this, are but mere husks and shells of churches, carcases without souls; for as there is no real union unto Christ without faith, so there is no real union among the members of any church without love, and that acting itself in all the duties mentioned, let not this ordinance be in vain.

These were the sentiments of those ancient fathers, who were in contempt called *Puritans*, because they labored to have the church brought to the pure standard of God's word; yet how are poor creatures treated now, for their attempting; (tho' very imperfectly) to repair the old wastes, the desolations of many generations? Isa. 6. 4. We come,

## V. To speak of what Ministers Power really is, and how they come by it.

WE have seen much already of what power they pretend to have; but 'tis needful to open what authority Christ has really given to his ministers. And the plain account in his word is,

1. That their authority is not over the bodies, but it concerns the souls of men. Obey them, — for they watch for your souls, Heb. 13. 17. And, 2. They have no power to make rules, nor to govern others judgments, but only to explain the rules which are made, and labour to move others to regard them. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand, 2 Cor. 1. 24. I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say. 1 Cor. 10. 15. Hence, 3. The peoples obligation to regard and follow any teachers, depends upon their teaching right. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, 2 Cor. 4. 2. They who teach right, teach by practice as well as word. Paul says, Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example; and he warns them against persons of a contrary walk, who mind earthly things, Phil. 3. 17—19. Again he says, Remember them which have

Dr. Owen on the 130th Psalm, Edition at Edinburgh 1749. p. 325. to 328.



the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the words of God whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Heb. 13. 7. Note, we are not to obey and follow them in an implicit, or customary way, but each one must consider, and follow others no further than they see that the end of their conversation is, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for evermore. v. 8. Yea, 14. People are so far from being under obligation to follow teachers, who don't lead in this way, that they incur guilt by such a following of them. The apostle John, speaking of the doctrine of Christ, says, *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor bid him God speed; for he that biddeh him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.* 2 John. 10. 11. And the great apostle of the gentiles says, *Tho' we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, (and than that ye have received) let him be accursed.* Gal. 1. 8, 9. And now, where is the power that is derived by a local succession from the apostles? And which many hold their authority from as ministers, and carry it so high as to forbid those who follow not them, even tho' the reason of it were a matter of conscience, because they really believed that such ministers neither preached nor practised agreeable to the gospel.

Paul was so far from establishing such a local power, that to guard against all such pretences, he states the case upon the highest pitch of all creature authority, viz. *apostles and angels*; and leaving all Peter's successors out of the question, he brings it up to the apostles themselves, and says, *Tho' we preach any other gospel than that ye have received, nay, if an angel directly from heaven should do so, let him be accursed.* Our modern ministers would evade all this, by telling us that they don't *pervert the gospel*; and that 'tis our erroneous judgments, or perverse wills that makes us leave them; but Paul instead of assuming any such dominion over others, *says, judge ye what I say*; and he implicitly charges them to reject him if he should come to them with another gospel.

Should any object that this allowing every one a right to receive or reject ministers as they judge best, will bring ministers authority to nothing, and so destroy such an order of men out of the church:

I reply, that 'tis so far from it, that this is the only way to establish the gospel ministry, upon its right foundation: for as Christ's kingdom is not of this world, but its foun-

vation and support is *truth*, and his ministers are furnished with that *treasure* \* in their souls; so the *manifestation* thereof commends them to every man's conscience, beyond what all others approbation can do. This leads us to view how ministers come by their authority. When Zion's king ascended on high, he gave gifts to men; a special part whereof were, *pastors and teachers*; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. † And his command is, As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ‡ This naturally opens the way for their being received into office in the church, as gifts from her king. Peter told the hundred and twenty disciples, that of the men which had accompanied with them, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, one must be ordained to be a witness with the apostles of his resurrection: accordingly they gave forth their lots; and thereby Matthias was put into that office. § And after the apostles were endowed with extraordinary power from on high, to witness for Christ, yet they did not so much as nominate the seven men, who were to be put into office in their presence, but said, Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the holy ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. They did accordingly, and set the men before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. || 6. 3. 6. And in Acts 14. 23. which speaks of ordaining elders in every church; many learned men assert, that the word which is translated, *ordained*, signifies the act of the church, declaring their choice of those elders, by stretching out, or lifting up the hands. \* And when Paul had given to Timothy a particular description of the characters of those who are to be put into the office both of bishops and deacons, he declares plainly that his design therein was, that Timothy might know how he ought to behave himself, in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, 1 Tim. 3. 15. Observe, he had no power over the church, but was to act as a leader in the church; and teach them what sort of men are to be chose into office, and assist in placing them therein. It is well known

\* 2 Cor. 4. 7. † Eph. 4. 8—12. ‡ 1 Pet. 4. 10.

§ Acts 1. 21—26. || ver. 8.

\* See the margin of *Cann's bible*; Dr. Watt's orthodoxy and charity, and Dr. Gill on the place.

known that the word *elder* in scripture, does not always mean persons in office, either in church or state; but often is used only for persons of superior gifts, age or experience; yea the name, when applied to officers, seems to derive its original, from the custom of choosing such persons into office; \* and in this very epistle the word is plainly used in a sense, which does not distinguish those who are in office from others, 1 Tim. 5. 1, 2.

Upon the whole, I can freely leave it with every conscience to judge, whether the scriptures carry the point a whit further than this, *That leading men in the primitive church, led in ordinations as well as other things.* And who will dispute that point with any body? Those who held the power to "constitute in office, and to remove from office," to be intirely in the church, yet always appoint leading men, (and such as are in office when they can be conveniently had) to act in and for the church, in ordinations. Much stress is laid by many, on the terms, *commit thou*, in 2 Tim. 2. 2. in order to prove the power of ordination to be inherent in them, who are already in office; but it has been already proved, that the apostles themselves, (even tho' they sometimes conveyed extraordinary gifts by laying on their hands, yet) did not pretend to act in ordinations, only in consequence of the churches act; therefore they properly acted as the churches mouth, in putting men into office, and charging them to be faithful therein: and Timothy, and all other leaders, ought to be very careful when they are called to assist in ordinations, to see that they commit the charge of souls, only to *faithful men*. Paul in writing to this same person, useth the same words, *This charge I commit unto thee*; and, *I give thee charge*, as synonymous terms, 1 Tim. 5. 18. & 6. 13. And be the right of ordination where it will, yet this is certain, that the direction is to commit the charge of souls, to *faithful men*; and none but such can truly be in the gospel line; and when any creep in, under a *sheeps cloathing*, who are not truly such; when they discover by their fruits that they are *false men*, our Lord commands his people to *beware of them*, Mat. 7. 14, 15.

Another text which is often advanced to prove that ministerial power is handed down by an external line from the

\* "Elders among the Jews, were the most considerable persons for age, experience, and wisdom, who constituted the council of the people; among the *primitive christians*, those of the first rank in the church were called *elders*." *Dodge's Dictionary.*



the apostles, is Mat. 28. 18.—20. But I think two things may be sufficient to evince the absurdity of construing that commission and promise in such a way.

1. All the promises of God, are in Christ Jesus; and the heirs of promise are only such as have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Heb. 6. 17, 18. How vain then must the attempt be, to apply that promise to any who have not fled to the gospel refuge?

2. Our Lord connects precept and promise together in the text, *Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*: Therefore this promise is so far from supporting a succession of unconverted ministers, that it could not support even the apostles themselves, if they turned aside from the line of truth; yea, instead of the promise, the curse would seize upon an apostle or angel, if they should turn off from the gospel way, as I have proved before. Should any say, that those words of Paul are *hypothetical* expressions; i. e. supposing a case for illustration, which is not granted, for 'tis readily allowed, that they are so; but I would have people remember, that 'tis chiefly from such ways of speaking, that they draw their pleas for unconverted ministers, as from 1 Cor. 13. 1—3. &c.

To shew that my opinion about a line of succession is not singular, I will transcribe some of Dr. Owen's thoughts thereon, which were published in London 1692. in a small piece called, "A guide to church-fellowship and order," wherein he says, p. 47, 48. "The office of the ministry, for the continuation of the church state, and administration of all ordinances of worship unto the end of the world, is sufficiently secured, (1.) By the law, constitution and appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ, erecting that office, and giving warranty for its continuance, to the consummation of all things, Mat. 28. 20. Eph. 4. 13. (2.) By his continuance according unto his promise, to communicate *spiritual gifts* unto men, for the ministerial edification of the church.—(3.) On the duty of believers, or of the church, which is, to chuse, call, and solemnly set apart unto the office of the ministry, such as the Lord Christ by his spirit, hath made meet for it, according unto the rule of his word.

"If all these, or any of them do fail, I acknowledge, says he, that all ministerial authority and ability for the dispensation of gospel ordinances must fail also, and consequently the state of the church. And those who  
plead

" plead for the continuation of a *successive ministry*, without respect unto these things, without resolving both the *authority* and *office* of it unto them; do but erect a *dead image*, instead of the living and life-giving institutions of Christ. They take away the *living creature*, and set up a *skin stuffed with straw*." Thus far Dr. Owen.

Compare this with the opinions of the present day. Mr. Fish says, " 'Tis true, indeed, Jesus did not go into the colleges or schools of learning, for his first ministers: nor was there any need of such a step, while Christ himself was personally present, to educate his sons. But they, whom he took into his school, were chiefly unlearned and ignorant men: to whom, in a little time, he gave such a measure of knowledge, learning and grace, as abundantly qualified them for the great work, where to he appointed them. p. 15. But now he says, " The *separates* having shut learning out of doors, have thereby deprived themselves of the *best means* of obtaining and preserving the *knowledge* of *pure divine truths*." p. 169. " Neither do they *know* whether the bible is rightly translated, *ONLY* as they have it from the *learned*." p. 167. And he says, our holding the whole power of *ordination* to be in the church, is " without any direction in the whole word of God; and contrary to plain gospel example. p. 145. But Men says he, " Having the word of reconciliation committed to them, by authorized hands, they become ambassadors for Christ, p. 17.

Here reader observe,

1. That I have proved that he charges us falsely, as to our shutting out learning.

2. Here is an awful stroke against the divinity of Jesus Christ: for it has been proved a little back, that the end of the conversation of true leaders is, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. But the end of Mr. Fish's conversation is the contrary, and so is that of a great part of the ministers of our land: \* For what less can be

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\* About 13 years ago, Dr. Mayhew of Boston, plainly in print struck against the *eternal* and *essential* divinity of our Lord Jesus. Which occasioned Mr. Pemberion's publishing a sermon with an appendix, upon Christ's power and divinity; to which Dr. Sewall, Mr. Prince, and Mr. Foxcroft, wrote a preface, wherein they express their hopes that, " By the blessing of Christ, it may be of excellent service to guard many of the readers, from those most dangerous suggestions against his adorable deity, which have been of late unhappily published, to the great grief and offence of many among us." The

the import of saying, that Christ taught and qualified men for the ministry, when he was "personally present," as he cannot or does not do now; what less can it be than to say, he is not *truly God* by nature, but only so by *office*, and that having set up officers in his kingdom, he has gone to heaven, and left them to order affairs in his absence? God has often changed his dispensations, but his nature and his grace remain ever the same. He inspired men to write the scriptures, and gave them power to *confirm his word with diverse miracles*; which is not necessary, since the bible is acknowledged to be complete. But 'tis as great a truth now, as ever, that, *No man knoweth the things of God, but the spirit of God*; and that each saint has received this spirit, that they might know the things that are freely given to them of God. Yet Mr. F. declares that we don't

They don't name either the author or book; yet this was the plainest testimony that was published among us on that occasion, as ever I heard of: neither can I learn that Dr. Mayhew ever retracted that dangerous and fundamental error; yet after he died in July 1766, he was celebrated from the pulpit, and press, by many ministers in town and country, as one of the brightest characters among them. Dr. Chauncy, who formerly wrote so much to try to prove that New-England ministers had not forfeited their character, by any of their open conduct, published a funeral sermon for him, wherein he greatly extols Dr. Mayhew; and in a note, p. 23, he says, "Two or 3 years ago a pamphlet appeared among us under the name of an *obscure person*, without reputation;—in which the Dr. was represented as an *enemy to the atonement made by Jesus Christ*. The writer of that piece (says Dr. C.) knew little of the Dr. or the true meaning of his works. He might as well have taxed any minister in the town or province upon this head." If I believed Dr. Chauncy's testimony in this, I should have a worse opinion of that order of ministers than I ever yet had; for I have great reason to believe, that Dr. Mayhew's writings, have done the most to corrupt peoples minds, and to prejudice them against the pure *doctrines of grace*, as they were held by the *fathers* of this country, of any one man in our land.

The *obscure person* without reputation, which Dr. C. refers to, is Mr. John Cleaveland, who was expell'd out of college, after he had been there about 3 years, only for his attending the worship of God, with the church which he was a member of, instead of going to hear a *candidate* which the *association* and the world had set up, in opposition to the church. He wrote against two of Dr. M. sermons; and the president who expelled him, did himself so much honor on this occasion, as to send Mr. Cleaveland a degree of *master of arts*.



don't "know whether we have the pure divine truths or not, ONLY as we have it from the learned." Whereas Paul says, my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in DEMONSTRATION of the SPIRIT, and of power: that your FAITH should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor. 2. 4, 5. 11, 12. And John says, little children, ye have an unction from the holy ONE, and ye KNOW all things; and the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing, teacheth you of all things. And he expressly declares, that it is the spirit of antichrist which denies this. 1 John 2. 18 — 27.

Then let Mr. F. look to it; for he has told us from Dr. Owen that the "best of human nature, if not united to the divine nature, is no better than sand to build the church upon" p. 56. Yea, and he has also given it as a clear mark of Christ's church, that it always has his holy spirit dwelling in it. What nonsense (if no worse) then is it, to tell of Christ's servants deriving their knowledge of the truth and right to preach it, only from the hands of men? His argument is that, "There is nothing of inspiration in translating the bible." Answer, there is as much of inspiration in that, as there is in transcribing of it; and how many thousand times has that been done, before it came to the copy that he has seen? and how does he know he has got the pure truth, as it was wrote by inspiration? True protestants all confess, that the certain knowledge of the truth, is attained only by the same way in the nature of it, which Paul points out for the unlearned, to gain it by; even that when truth is rightly delivered in words easy to be understood, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth. This is in the midst of the chapter, which is concluded with a precept which these ministers often remind us of, viz. Let all things be done decently and in order, 1 Cor. 14. 9, 24, 25, 40. And a main indecency and disorder which is therein condemned, is speaking in the church, in language not easily understood. And who are more guilty of such disorders than these great pretenders to learning! And what can be a greater plague to the church, than the setting up men for ministers, who never came to this knowledge of the truth?

But here I am checked, for Mr. F. says, "We approbate none for the work of the ministry, without enquiring after, and obtaining some hopeful evidences of an inward work of grace": and he says, that for separates to suggest the contrary, shows a want of good temper, and of a tender regard to truth; for they might know better if they would," p. 166.

I desire to be informed, how we shall know better. Does Mr. F. believe in his conscience, that renewing grace is entailed to colleges? \*

A gentleman of considerable learning, told me, that he was once discoursing this matter with an aged minister, not far from Mr. F. and asked him if he ever knew one who had got his degree at college, denied an approbation, if he sought it? He replied, that he had known one: but upon further enquiry, was forced to confess that, that one went into another county and got an approbation there. In fact, the right of trying ministers, which Christ gave to his church, and commended her for exercising that power, in detecting false men, (Rev. 2. 2.) is now usurped by the clergy, and after they have thus robbed God's people of their right, they charge them with want of a good temper, if they will not be easy under such tyranny; and with a want of regard to truth, if they suggest that ministers don't use that power aright.

I would be far from charging them all with this; for one of Mr. Fish's brethren of as good credit as he, says of many who have taken degrees at college, "Alas, for the encouragement they meet with! No sooner do these light, airy, fashionable young men, who evidently deny, oppose and banter, both publickly and privately, the great soul humbling, and Christ exalting doctrines of the gospel,"

\* Mr. Edwards was far from thinking so; for the same book where he would confine the ministers to such as man had taught for that purpose; yet he says of colleges, "They ought to be so constituted, that vice and idleness should have no living there: they are intolerable in societies, whose main design is, to train up youth in christian knowledge and eminent piety. — It seems to me to be a reproach to the land, that ever it should be so with our colleges, that instead of being places of the greatest advantages for true piety, one can't find a chill thither, without great danger of his being infected, as to his morals; as it has certainly sometimes been with these societies." Thoughts on the work, 1742. p. 349, 350. And I suppose it has been more so since, than ever it was before.

“ pel, and ridicule experimental religion as *enthusiasm*,  
 “ and resolve christian experiences into an *over heated*  
 “ *imagination*, and *disorder'd brain*, if not *satanical delusi-*  
 “ *on*; I say no sooner do these young men come forth  
 “ from the feet of *Camaliel* into the world, and begin to  
 “ exercise their gifts, but they are *at once* invited to preach  
 “ and settle in the ministry; and there are *ministers* and  
 “ churches enough that will ordain them, notwithstanding  
 “ the *testimony* which the serious, and such as are concer-  
 “ ned for the doctrines and interest of Christ, bear against it.  
 “ This is too much the case at this day. We have *fre-*  
 “ *quent* and *flagrant* instances of it; he that *runs* may read  
 “ it, and he is *wilfully blind* that does not see it. And  
 “ alas how dark the aspect on these churches! These things  
 “ are a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation.”

Let these ministers make *straight paths* for their own  
 feet, before they bear so hard upon us again, for leaving  
 of them.

Before I leave this head, I would insert a few passages ta-  
 ken from Dr. Owen, who says, “ Dr. *Stillingfleet* denies  
 “ unto the people all liberty or ability to chose their own  
 “ pastors, to *judge* what is meet for their own *edification*;  
 “ what is heresy, or a pernicious error, and what is not,  
 “ or any thing of like nature. This is almost the same  
 “ with that of the Pharisees, concerning them who *admi-*  
 “ *red* and followed the doctrine of our Saviour, John 7.  
 “ 49. *This people which know not the law.*—Yet was it  
 “ *this people* whom the apostles directed to chose out from  
 “ among themselves, persons meet for an evangelical  
 “ office, Act 6. The same people who joined with the  
 “ apostles and elders in the consideration of the grand  
 “ case concerning the continuation of the legal ceremonies,  
 “ and were associates with them in the determination of  
 “ it, Acts 15. The same to whom all the apostolical epistles  
 “ excepting some to particular persons, were written.—  
 “ unto whom of all sorts, it is commanded that they should  
 “ examine & try the spirit of antichrist and false teachers.—  
 “ 1 John 2, 3. &c. *That people*, who in following ages  
 “ *adher'd* unto the faith, and the orthodox profession of  
 “ it, when almost *all the bishops* were become *Arian* heri-  
 “ ticks.—This principle of the reformation, in vindication  
 “ of the rights, liberties and privileges of christian people,  
 “ to

\* Mr. Porter of Bridgewater's sermon at the ordination at  
 Freetown 1747. P. 27, 28.



" to judge and chose for themselves in matters of religion,  
 " we do abide by, and maintain.

" Yea, says Dr. Owen, I shall not be afraid to say, that  
 " as the reformation was begun and carried on by this  
 " principle : so when *this people* shall thro' an apprehensi-  
 " on of their ignorance, weakness and unmeetness to judge  
 " in matters of religion for themselves, and their own duty,  
 " be kept and debar'd from it ; or when thro' their own  
 " sloth, negligence and viciousness, they shall be really  
 " incapable to manage their own interest in church affairs,  
 " as being fit only to be governed, if not as brute crea-  
 " tures, yet as mute persons, and that these things are im-  
 " proved by the ambition of the clergy, ingrossing all things  
 " in the church to themselves, as they did in former ages, —  
 " if the *old popedom* do not return, a *new one* will be erec-  
 " ted as bad as the other."

I leave others to judge how near this comes to our day,  
 with only observing, that we have seen one who calls him-  
 self a *congregational minister*, not only claiming great pow-  
 er in the church for himself and brethren, and judging  
 others hearts ; but also claiming *infallibility* in his judg-  
 ment : for he concludes his long story of Mr. Davenport  
 with these words, viz. " Suffer me here, to drop a word  
 " of awakening, to all you that have separated from our  
 " churches, that if *this confession* of Mr. Davenport, toge-  
 " ther with the truths that *have been*, and *are yet to be*  
 " told you, don't convince you that you have been, and  
 " still are *deluded*, that is, *deceived* and turned aside from  
 " the way of truth and duty, *in the matter of your separa-*  
 " *ting*, you may, from your *non conviction*, KNOW FOR  
 " CERTAIN, not only that you are thus *deluded*, but that  
 " your *delusion* is very strong." p. 128.

It deserves particular notice, that this *new infallible* tri-  
 bunal, delivers off the sentence, as the *old one* used to do,  
 from a *fallible* rule ; which rule the judge does not seem  
 to understand very well himself ; for Mr. Davenport's great-  
 est error was, his assuming the power to himself to try mi-  
 nisters, and then his openly " advising and urging" people  
 to forsake such as he had condemn'd, by a " judgment for-  
 " med, (in several instances) rashly, and upon slender  
 " grounds," and 'tis expressly "*such separations*" that he  
 condemn'd and retracted ; and the wrong which he parti-  
 cularly

\* Dr. Owen on the nature of evangelical churches, vid. Dr. J. Mather's vindication of the order of these churches, p. 27. & c

cularly observed in exhorters, was their being "puffed up." This is the rule that our new judge gives sentence upon: and in p. 164. he says, "*Stand by thy self, come not near me, for I am holier than thou*," (Psalm 65. 5.) is certainly the language of spiritual pride; but this was the language of separating from our churches, because (as they said) there were hypocrites in them, which they could "commune with." But I think we may claim liberty of a review upon this judgment: for the text says nothing concerning separating good men from bad ones: others are allowed to be *holy*, but the proud language is, *I am holier than thou*. Now this being the state of the case, let us look a little forward, and observe that our new judge owns the separates to be "erring brethren, and obliging good neighbours;" yet some of his concluding advice to his people is, "Go not after them nor follow them.—How can you, with a good conscience, after *I have shewn you from whence they arose, their principles, spirit and tendency?* They are separates; let them be so, let them alone." p. 191. Another article that Mr. D. confessed was his "following impulses or impressions, as a rule of conduct, whether they came with or without a text of scripture; and neglecting to observe the analogy of scripture." This Mr. F. declares to be our case, p. 140. and by others, all inside religion is often treated with contempt under those names; as if none followed unreasonable impressions, but those who are zealous in religion; whereas all men are more or less guilty of such conduct: therefore I will insert bishop Burnet's thoughts thereon, who says, "There is a tyranny in most men's nature, which makes them desire to subdue all others, by the strength of their understanding;—this imperious temper when it works upon subjects of religion, finds somewhat to raise its spleen, that was of itself imperious enough before; and that which is called *fury* and *rage*, when it is employed in other disputes, comes to be called *zeal*, when it is turned towards the theories that relate to another world. But when we consider what a sublime thing *divine truth* is, and what a poor low thing the *mind of man* is, we shall see cause to blunt a little the edge of our spirits, if they are too sharp in such matters. Man is much governed by *fancy*, and fancy follows the texture of the animal spirits, which render many more capable of apprehending objects, that are some way proportioned to them, and more disposed to follow them; so that *temper* prepares men

" for

in for some opinions, and prepossesses them against others: With the greatest part of mankind, education is so powerful, that they are scarce ever able to overcome it; and wit and education and temper have hit together, it will be required a very extraordinary elevation to rescue a man from their force. *Let our antagonist duly consider this, and we shall hope to see him treat his brethren in another manner than he has done, concerning their leaving the ways that education inclines him to persist in.* I shall finish Mr. Davenport's affair with remarking, that tho' our author mentions his burning of books, and attempting the same concerning cloaths, and ornaments at New-London; † yet he seems hardly sensible wherein the greatest mistake lay, in these transactions; which according to my weak apprehension was, in venting their resentment against things without, and not regarding what was within as they ought: for if we could burn all the idols, books or hereticks in the world, it would avail us nothing, without charity in our own souls, which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. It is high time to come to treat a little,

## VI. Of the Manner of preaching.

*Fish* says, "Writing down all that is judged expedient to deliver, at that time, and praying for assistance in delivering, is no way inconsistent, but incumbent duty. *Ecc. 12. 9, 10.* "Because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge, yea he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." Answer, Solomon wrote his proverbs and speeches, in order to spread them thro' the world, but who ever thought that he read his prayer, and sermon at the dedication of the temple; 1 Kin. 8. 12. or his other speeches to the people. When writing for the press, and writing for the pulpit, can be proved to be equal, then this text may serve the turn 'tis brought for, and not 'till then. Forty five years ago Mr. *Siddons* called this reading of sermons a "late practice of some ministers;" 'twas an upstart notion then, and he gives these reasons against

• Preface to bishop Burnet's translation of Lactantius's history of persecutors, 1687.

† Which was on March 6th and 7th, 1743.



1. *It was not the manner of the prophets and apostles.* Balaam read the roll that was written from the mouth of Jeremiah; but Jeremiah was not wont to read his prophecies. It was the manner of the Jews to read the scriptures in the synagogues; but after that, it was their way to instruct and exhort men, not from any written copy: Act. 13. 15. Luk. 4. 17, 20.

2. *The reading of sermons is a dull way of preaching.* And Dr. Watts says, "A paper with the most pathetic lines written upon it, has no fear nor hope, no zeal or compassion; 'tis conscious of no design, nor has any solicitude for the success: and a mere reader, who coldly tells the people what his paper says, seems to be as void of all these necessary qualifications, as his paper is." † Yet old Mr. John Cotton, one of the first teachers in Boston, goes beyond these later divines, and says, "The reading of a sermon for preaching, is a *sinful* manner of preaching; the difference will ever hold, between the word *read*, and *preached*: they are two distinct ordinances." ‡ And I think these two reasons may evince the truth of his sentence; viz.

1. This reading method is a principal means of upholding ignorant and false men in a way of imposing on mankind. We have proof by various evidences, that several scholars in our colleges, both formerly and laterly, who either wanted a capacity or an inclination for learning, have practiced the getting others to make their lessons for them; and so by the use of notes they learn to impose upon their tutors at college, and upon the people after they come from it.

Hence,

2. It has a natural tendency to make the word of God of none effect, which requireth saints to know their teachers, and to esteem them very highly in love, for their works sake, 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. Whereas in this way, tho' people may sometimes know that their minister reads other mens works; yet how can they ever know when they read their own? One distinguishing character of false teachers is, that they have men's persons in admiration, because of advantage: and so instead of knowing and esteeming ministers for their works sake, they would have their persons in admiration for the sake of their great swelling words and sounding titles. These are murmurers and complainers, who often

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deliver

• Sermon called the defects of preachers reprovd 2d edition p. 15, 16.

† Miscellaneous thoughts p. 106.

‡ Mr. Cotton's answer to Mr. Ball, p. 48. viz. the end of Stoddard's sermon.

deliver *hard speeches* against the members of Christ. Jud. 15, 16.

I heartily concur with the sentiments of an eminent minister in London above 20 years ago, who said, "*Paul's* advice to *Timothy* is, *meditate on these things, give thyself wholly unto them.* 1 Tim. 4. 15. You will find it in spirituals, as it is in temporals, the diligent hand maketh rich. He that makes no preparation before hand, what he should say to his people, tempts God to come out of his ordinary way to his assistance, as he that trusts wholly to his own preparations, makes a *god of his gifts.*"

\* These words were delivered in an ordination sermon, from Luk. 12. 42, 43. where ministers are called *stewards*; and as such they ought diligently to improve all the advantages which are given them, to *treasure up* knowledge of divine truth; and ever to trust in God for direction and assistance to *bring forth out of their treasure things new and old*, as any occasion calls.

The *method* of true ministers, both in the Jewish and christian church, always was to *preach by faith.* 2 Cor. 4. 13. 'We having the *same spirit of faith*, as it is written, *I believed, and therefore have I spoken: we also believe, and therefore speak.*' I am sensible that many will own that when a minister has faith in exercise, he can preach better without *notes* than with them, who yet say, he ought to have them, because he may be shut up. Others turn off the text now cited to *extraordinary* times; while both of these insist upon Christ's promise, *Lo I am with you alway*, as the main proof of their notion of ministerial authority. Such confused work do men make with the bible! One while that promise shall entail Christ's presence to such teachers as men have *heaped to themselves*; and yet upon another turn, these same men are afraid he will *not be with them*, and so have *sought out inventions*, to get along without him. This brings us to speak,

## VII. Of the way of Ministers Support.

☼☼☼ E. are often told that *they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 14. but as ☼☼ often, as many have read this text to others, ☼☼☼ it seems as tho' they had never yet read it to themselves; for the common *practice* of our land says, "They

"They which preach the gospel shall live of the law:" yea, and not the law of God, but by the law of man; and however pious the persons might be who first made the law; I think the evidences that have been before exhibited, prove that the law in it self is of such a nature, as that which we read of in Psal. 94. 20. For tho' some may think that those *spoiling of goods, and haling men and women to prison*, which we have seen, is only an abuse of the law; yet a little reflection may convince them of their mistake, and that the use of it carries those things in its very nature. The great design of the law, is to make all the inhabitants of the town or parish, pay what the rulers say is their part towards the incumbent ministers support; and the natural language of all that are attached to that way is, "If others are not made to do their part, I will not do mine," and where all the people *love to have it so*, they may get along without such open violence: but when any happen to be convinced that the way is wrong, and so will not give what is required, they are naturally led to take it by force. God said of the priests, who practised so formerly, that their *sin was very great*, 1 Sam. 2. 16, 17. And how vain is it, for men to say otherwise of such practice now?

Many plead in this case, that promise to the church, that *Kings shall be her nursing fathers, and Queens her nursing mothers*. But what an odd story would it be, for any to tell of very kind parents, who manifested such a tender regard for their children, that they would rob one child of his food, or cast him into a dungeon, to uphold another in grandeur! Power must be exerted in families or kingdoms to restrain one person or community from injuring another; but nothing can bring any to act aright in the performance or support of divine worship, but light and truth. Hence when the place and furniture for worship, was to be provided in the wilderness with costly materials; tho' the great lawgiver, could infallibly have prescribed each mans part by law, if he had been pleased so to do; yet he took another method. For Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel saying, *This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, silver, &c.* Exod. 35. 4, 5. So when the temple was to be built, David appeared as a nursing father in Israel, and set his affection to the house of his God, in such a manner,



that of his own proper goods, he gave thereto, *three thousand talents of gold, and seven thousand talents of silver*; and by his instruction and example, he moved other fathers and rulers to offer willingly for the house, above 5000 talents of gold, and a 10,000 talents of silver, beside great preparations of other materials. 1 Chron. 29. 3-7. This was the method which was taken to prepare a place for worship, both in the wilderness, and in the promised land. And as to the performance of worship, the constant language of the divine direction was, that every person of all ranks should bring his offering, which God had prescribed. And tho' I know but little, yet in all that has been said upon these controversies, I never could see any proof from the bible of any allowance of the use of coercive power, to compel any to bring their offering, even under the law, where church and state were one: how much less then can it be warrantable under the gospel, where Christ's kingdom is not of this world? Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. Love of the gospel (as one observes) not of the art of civil authority, not of a certain bargain made with the people, containing a bond of stipulation; but this is the order of it; those whom Christ sends, profit the people, and the church becomes bountiful, and the fruit the gospel produceth maintains the preachers of it. Paul in speaking of its effects among the Philippians says, "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account." Phil. 4. 17. And he says to the Galatians, "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things: he be not deceived, God is not mocked." Gal. 6. 6, 7. The manner as well as master of this duty is ordained by him; and he will not be mocked, but takes notice of the ways. Where mens fear towards God is taught by the precepts of men, (1 Tim. 2. 15.) there ministers and people will be principally concerned to secure their own interest; but when consciences are taken out of the way, and souls realize that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we all have to do: a regard to him will engage ministers to watch for souls, as those who must give account; and to labor to support the weak, and suffer all things, rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Act. 20.

of all those who pay no regard to his command in this respect, and also of those who consent they have found a better way for its performance, than that which God has prescribed; and he will deal with each of them according to their works.

I am sensible that this is a darling point with many, who will make a dreadful noise about consequences; and in particular, they often tell us, that, if it was not for the support of religion by law, a great part of the people would be mere heathens. Ah! that is a dreadful thing indeed!

But who are heathens? Paul's account of them is, that they had some knowledge of the truth, and yet did not practice agreeable to it, but held the truth in unrighteousness; and when they knew God, they glorified him not as God. Such were heathens in Paul's day; but things are so much changed since, that we have a generation of christians now, who pay so little regard to God's authority, that few of them would do any thing to support their teachers, if man's authority was not exerted in the affair. The Lord says,

*I love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering.* Now this is a prophecy which Jesus expressly applied to the gospel days; and herein is a promise that Zion's mourners shall be comforted, and strengthened to build the old wastes, and repair the waste cities, (or churches) the desolations of many generations; and that Christ's ministers shall be honoured and liberally supported among the gentiles; and to prevent mistakes about the manner of doing it, he immediately adds, *I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering, and I will direct their work in truth.*

*Isai. 61. 1-8.* The priests were supported of old out of the offerings of the people; even so hath the Lord ordained, concerning his ministers now; but men have ordained the contrary, and rob others, yea even the widow and fatherless, to uphold the name of religion, and so think to

cover  
20. 28.—25. 1 Cor. 9. 12. And a like view will engage people to know and esteem true ministers, and not watch for their halting, but endeavour to stir them up to be fulfilling their ministry, and also freely to communicate of their carnal things to them.

1 Thes. 5. 12. 1 Cor. 14. 20. 1 Cor. 13. 1. Indeed, instead of bearing one's self as a servant, each one would be concerned to approve himself to his heavenly master, by a right improvement of all the spiritual or temporal gifts, they are made stewards of; and to his upreach other thereto; by the use of all gospel means; and leave courts, consistory, and prison to be used to discipline the sinful world. 1 Cor. 6. 1. 1 Tim. 2. 9.

Rom. 1. 12, 19.

† Isai. 61. 1. Luk. 4. 21

cover themselves from the reproach and wrath, which is coming on the heathen. \* So when destruction was declared of old, as coming upon a proud and sensual people, under the metaphor of a sweeping tempest, the scornful men that ruled them said, *When the overflowing scourge shall pass thro', it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid our selves.* Therefore after speaking of the sure foundation which believers are built upon, the Lord says, *Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, &c.* *Isai. 28. 14-17.* And as men often make a mock of such warnings, the prophet in ver. 22. says, *Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.*

Mr. Fish insinuates that 'tis our lusts which move us to deny their way of supporting ministers, and says, "Let the lord of conscience judge, whether 'tis not covetousness, (accompanied with wilfulness and disobedience, all founded on weakness) rather than pure conscience, that induceth

\* Such people outdo Saul; for he forced himself and offered, but they must needs force their neighbours to offer. It is a duty incumbent upon all to exhort and stir up one another to every gospel practice, in our several stations; and many will tell us that 'tis an indifferent thing as to the manner of ministers support, if the duty is but performed: so Saul in another case thought he had performed the commandment of the Lord, because he had destroyed all, except the best of the sheep and oxen; and they were proposed for a sacrifice to God: and when he is blamed for it, he says the people spared them. Take notice of what a good design he had, to maintain divine worship; and how fair his plea was; for the work he was sent upon was to destroy utterly the sinners the Amalekites, and tho' ox and sheep were named in his orders; yet his reason would say, "They are harmless creatures, and what hurt can they do, now after their wicked masters are slain? Especially when they are in Israel's hands, who intend to worship God with them?" Let our modern reasoners produce finer pleas if they can, in the present case: yet notwithstanding Saul's excuses, Samuel said to him, *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams: for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry: because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being King.* 1 Sam. 13. 12, and 15. 13.—23. True obedience respects the manner as well as matter of the duty, and where the word is express in both, 'tis rejecting the word if we don't attend to both, and our conduct (especially if we know better) is rebellion, instead of obedience, and such worship is idolatry, instead of hearkning to the true God.



“enduceth the separates to *forfeit* their honour, in breaking their *own* and their *fathers* civil covenants, to save their money.” p. 164. Did mortals ever hear such a reference before?

1. If he left the affair with the Lord of conscience, why does he publish such reproachful suggestions to the world? for hereby we are stigmatized in this world, while the trial is refer'd to that which is to come.

2. In the face of this reference to the great Judge, he has judged himself, that we have “forfeited our honor, to save our money,” and if that is decided, what then is left to the other Judge? unless it be what *spiritual judges* used to refer to the *secular arm*, viz, the execution of their sentence, and inflicting of punishment upon such as they had condemned.

3. Here is a fallshood in the face of his bill, for he charges us with “breaking *civil covenants*,” whereas we have no contention with him about *civil covenants*; the point we are upon, is the support of *religious worship*. The *offerings* of the people, out of which they who ministered at the altar were fed, were as different from civil contracts, as their own *houses* were from the *temple*. Covenants which are contrary to God's word, ought not to be kept. Did *Herod's* covenant or oath excuse him in taking off *John's* head? But how are these covenants made, that we should forfeit our honour in breaking of them? Answer, the *majority* of a town or parish votes, to a candidate a certain sum, to come and be their minister; and let them offer ever so much, the candidate rarely takes up with the first proposal, and tho' 'tis often said by ministers, that the “call of the people is the call of God;” yet 'tis commonly the *worldly* sum that turns the scale. This is too evident in our land, to make a jest of; and it has produced the same effects here as in the other *England*, where the excellent *Hervey* cried out with his dying breath, “Oh! why do ministers neglect the charge of so kind a Saviour; *save* upon the *great*, and hunt after *worldly preferments* with so much eagerness, to the disgrace of our order? These, these are the things, and not our poverty or obscurity, which render the clergy so justly contemptible to the *worldlings*.”

It is the majority of the people, be they saints or sinners, which make these covenants, and *John* gives this as a distinguishing mark of *false prophets*, that *they are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world hear-*

eth them. 1 John 4. 5. And the text which our author is labouring to apply to us, when he delivered this sentence, is easily retorted, viz. 2 Tim. 4. 3. for it were easy to shew, that a great part of the congregations among us, will not endure sound doctrine, and also that after their own lusts they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. His sense of *heaping to themselves teachers*, is, "that they are plenty and cheap;" and he says of separates, that "according to one grand principle of their churches, every one must exercise his gifts in public, as he is impressed or moved by the spirit: which gives them teachers, heaps upon heaps; besides their ordained elders, who are generally taken out of the same heaps." p. 163. I have before shewn that we hold with the apostles, that each one ought to improve the gifts which God has given him; but to pretend that we hold all to have the gift for public teachers, is only to give another proof of his being a false accuser, if not a fierce despiser of those that are good. 2 Tim. 3. 3. Instead of our having heaps of teachers, there is such a scarcity of them, that the cries of hungry souls, constrain ordained elders to be absent from their people, much more than they would think to be duty, if there were not so many destitute flocks, while none can pretend, but that there is a plenty of teachers on the other side, whom men have taught, or made to themselves: and let every conscience judge which sort do most to gratify men's lusts or itching ears. And as to being cheap, it is no new thing for men to lavish gold out of the bag,\* to set up and adorn false worship, rather than to forsake all for Christ.

Our author insinuates, that we are not governed by pure conscience, but rather by various lusts founded on weakness: but does he or his brethren take Paul's advice and directions, about dealing with weak brethren? or rather is not the liberty which they would allow, just the same with Pharaoh's; go ye, serve the Lord: only let your flocks and your herds be stayed. † Our fathers were not sensible

\* Isai. 46. 6.

† "Good conscience men allow (they say)

"but must be understood,

"To say as they themselves do say;

"or else it can't be good.

\* In ancient ages, when the english realm,

"And popish zealots, placed at the helm;

"To

at first, what could there be bounding the use of coercive power to support religion? But our illustrious governor says, "We find nothing in the new charter, of an ecclesiastical constitution, nor Liberty of conscience is granted to all except Pupils." And Dr. Mather informs us, that in a sermon to the first general assembly, after Plymouth and Massachusetts colonies were united, from Chron. 12. 12. it was declared concerning the civil magistrate, that "He is most properly the officer of human society, and that a rebellion by non conformity to this or that imposed way of worship, does not break the terms on which he is to enjoy the benefit of human society. A man has a right unto his life, his estate, his liberty, and his family, also he should not come up to these & those blessed institutions of our Lord." And of persecuting such as dissent, he says, "These violences may bring the erroneous to be hypocrites, but they will never make them to be believers; no, they naturally prejudice mens minds against the cause, which is therein pretended for, as being a weak, a wrong, and tyrannical." Lord, how consistent is this with the spirit of the charter! that religion, tythes were fixed, By canon laws, with civil intermix'd, which form the English constitution so, That after ages can't the tythes forego: And hence dissenters are obliged there, To pay incumbents, whom they never hear, Whom some condemn, as a prelatic game, Who yet, by MAJORITY would play the same, And a bare majority would claim the pail, For incumbents, than which nothing worse, Lordly diocesan, himself, can claim: So these two LORDS do differ, but in name, One pleading English laws, for his support; The other feigning acts of our own court, Alledging law, as a perverted sense, To render CHARTER grants, a mere pretence; And as if law and charter both intend, To crush one church, another to besfriend, They'd make them mean, the same that Pharaoh said, Go serve the Lord, but let your flocks be stay'd, But if one church be tax'd, to serve another, No matter whether, done by this or t'other." These lines are taken out of a *letter*, published in 1743, by the honourable Edward Goddard Esq; late of Framingham, who was formerly one of his Majesty's council in this province; who closed a former tract with these lines, viz. "Tis lordly power, not a due respect, To th' ministerial function I reject."

Mr. Hutchinson's history, vol. 2. p. 10.



evil cause. — The churches of God abroad counted, that things did not go well among us, until they judged us more fully come up unto the apostolical rule, to leave the otherwise minded unto God. Nor would I desire my self to suffer persecution upon a clearer cause than that of testifying against our persecution of other christians, that are not of my opinion. † I come to give my thoughts.

### VIII. Of Covenant-breaking.

\*\*\* WE are often charged with this, and Mr. Fish says, "The body of the separatists are true breakers." W for whereas they promised, to walk with us in holy fellowship, in all gospel ordinances, they openly renounced communion with us, when the standing churches, were daily attending these ordinances of Christ, agreeable to his institutions." page. 173.

Now in order to view this matter in a just light, we should know what a gospel covenant is; and Paul says, They first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. And David says, I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments. The engagement to God is perpetual, and that no one another is conditional, by the will of God; which makes it to be as incumbent duty to withdraw from persons or churches, who are evidently corrupt, and will not be reclaimed, as to walk with those who are not so. Some bring that text in the present case, which says of a saint, He sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not: so he does, and he will keep God's righteous judgments, yet it turn out to his own hurt ever so much; even tho' they put him out of the synagogue, or kill him therefor. God says to his ancient church, I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings: but they like men, have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me, Hos. 6. 6, 7. The words are expressly applied by our Saviour, to those who were as zealous for learning and order, as many among us, when they complained of his freedom and compassion towards sinners. Mat. 9. 13. And of his disciples plucking ears of corn on the sabbath, to satisfy their hunger, Mat. 12. 1-7.

† Magdalia, Book 7. p. 29.

And will not the same Jesus, vindicate the cause of his disciples now, when they go over *men's lines* to get food for their *hungry souls*? which was, as I have proved the first cause of our separation. One of the most frightful charges which our author lays against us is, "That the following disorders, are owing chiefly, if not entirely to the separations, viz. The Lord's day is awfully profaned, by numbers tarrying at home, not finding a freedom to attend any publick worship at all; and no enquiry is made after them, nor any care, (that I know of) taken of them by authority, supposing they are at other meetings; for none knows where they properly belong; others are present at one meeting, in the morning, and at noon ride off in companies to other meetings, at a distance, it may be to hear the separates; and after that, go and do as they please; pleading liberty of conscience." p. 72.

This is indeed a terrible story, but many a Jesuit has told as frightful a one, about the consequences of letting common people have the bible; and with as much truth as this for, while the argument turns upon this point, That because many have abused liberty, therefore we must not let people use it. And tho' both churchmen and dissenters have often amused people with their harangues upon liberty of conscience; yet, as Dr. Owen observes, "When it comes unto the issue, where a man is born, and in what church he is baptized in his infancy, there all obtrude is presented, and in the communion of that church he is to abide, on the penalties of being esteemed and dealt with as a schismatick. In what national church any person is baptized, in that national church he is to continue, for answer the contrary at his peril. And in the precincts of what parish his habitation falls to be, in that particular parish church is he bound to communicate in all ordinances of worship." \* This is the sentence of the same author, that Mr. Fish quotes, the most of any one when he is shewing the attempts which the gates of hell makes against Christ's church. And he must be strangely blinded who can't see that the case, among these, which our antagonist calls congregational churches, is exactly like what Dr. Owen describes of national ones. We have already produced the testimony of the heads of one of the colleges, that ministers would confine us all to for teachers, wherein they say, "That neither the majority nor part of the members in full communion, nor any

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\* Dr. Owens guide to church fellowship and order, p. 4, 5.

“ other persons in any parish or society, have any right or  
 “ warrant to appoint any house or place for worship on  
 “ the sabbath, distinct and separate from, and in oppositi-  
 “ on to the meeting-house, the public place appointed by  
 “ the general-assembly, and the parish.” The general as-  
 sembly are the *law-givers* for the church, and the parish  
 are the *executors* thereof : and we have instances in all  
 parts of the land, of persons who would not separate from  
 the churches in general, if they might be allowed only the  
 liberty of going a little further over the parish line to join  
 where they are best edified ; but that must not be suffered,  
 lest one minister interfere with another, for each one must  
 look to his gain from his quarter : and the honour also of the  
 parish minister is concerned. \*

“ ‘Tis St. Paul’s advice to Titus 2. 15. *Let no man despise thee.*  
 “ Answer : ‘Tis great pity, that this text should commonly be made  
 “ use of as a cover to carnal preachers, and be perverted in favour  
 “ of their pride and ambition.—They interpret whatever is done  
 “ to their persons, as an assault against their holy function, en-  
 “ gaging themselves in worldly contests, and pouring forth their  
 “ malice and bitterness upon all those, who, they suppose have af-  
 “ fronted them. If a Child of God, and especially one of an in-  
 “ ferior rank, deals plainly with them, they swell with anger,  
 “ and tell him, they are not accountable to him ; he should  
 “ meddle with his own business, and not reflect upon the sacred  
 “ order. Now people being very well acquainted with the chur-  
 “ lish temper of a great many ministers, they are afraid to speak  
 “ to them at all, or to do any thing which the ministers may in-  
 “ terpret to be against the respect due unto them : as for exam-  
 “ ple, to frequent the sermons of others, whereby they may be  
 “ better edified, or otherwise to converse with God’s faithful ser-  
 “ vants.—The way for ministers to avoid contempt, is to perform  
 “ their duty with all application and diligence, and by leading  
 “ a blameless life, ward off the reproaches and censures of men.  
 “ True it is, the wicked will speak evil of them, bely and slander  
 “ them, notwithstanding their unspotted life and conversation ;  
 “ but it is no more, than smoke dissipated by the sun, and their  
 “ calumny will soon vanish away ; for when they are known, no  
 “ body will believe them any more ; but Christ’s own lambs will  
 “ then put an high value and esteem upon the ministers of  
 “ Christ”. Dr. *Franks’s* treatise against the fear of man. p. 91,  
 92, 93. Again he says, “ Every one ought to examine himself,  
 “ whether he comes truly in the Name of Christ ; whether he be  
 “ sent by him, and keep close to the word of God ; or whether,  
 “ instead of God’s word, he entertain his hearers with fine critical  
 “ remarks, histories, symbols, flourishes of wit, flowers of oratory,  
 “ and other such-like human inventions ; yea, whether he doth  
 “ in his sermons wholly pervert God’s ordinance by rejecting  
 “ and calumniating those who desire heartily to govern their lives  
 “ by



A glaring proof of this, has lately been exposed to the public. A number of people in one part of *Ipwich*, withdrew from a minister, who openly appeared against the revival of religion, above 20 years ago, and embodied into a church, and made choice of Mr. *John Cleaveland* for their pastor: who had been expelled out of college, as related before: yet a number of ministers, who were friends to that revival, assisted in his ordination, and so received that church into fellowship with the standing churches, and they afterward were set off as a distinct society, by the general court. But as they were blessed with a wonderful work of conviction and conversion among them four years ago, many from neighbouring parishes, who had received soul-deliverance there, were desirous of joining to that church, and were accordingly received; which gave so great offence that many neighbouring ministers who own'd it to be a good work, yet have now refused communion with Mr. *Cleaveland* and his church, only because they receive members over parish lines. A distinct narrative of these things he published to the world, last summer. So that all the pretence of liberty of conscience in our land, comes to the same issue that Dr. *Owen* speaks of, even liberty to join with the parish church, or be esteemed a schismatick.

I heartily concur with him that, causeless separations from established churches, walking according to the order of the gospel (tho' perhaps failing in the practice of some things of small concernment) is no small sin; but separation from the sinful practices and disorderly walkings, and false unwarranted ways of worship, in any, is to fulfil the precept of *not partaking in other men's sins*. \* But (as he says elsewhere) † an old opinion of the unlawfulness of separation from a church, on the account of the mixture of wicked men in it, is made a scarecrow to frighten men from attempting the reformation of the greatest evils. Again he says, "churches are not such sacred machines as some suppose, erected and acted for the outward interest and advantage of any sort of men; but only means of the edification of believers, which they are bound to make use of, in obedience unto by the gospel of Christ. He that hears such a railer, doth not hear Christ, but the Devil himself". p. 94. "A farthing is not despised, because we value it as a farthing; for us valued for no more: the same is the case, when we value an idle babler according to his worth." p. 89.

\* Eschol. p. 37.

† Guide to Fellowship. p. 23.

"unto the *commands of Christ*, and no otherwise," \* Once  
 "more he says, "A *man* *enabled by spiritual gifts*,  
 "and *engaged by sense of duty* to labor constantly in the  
 "use of all means appointed by Christ, for the edification  
 "of the church, or increase of his mystical body, is requi-  
 "red in such a church, as a believer may conscientiously  
 "join himself unto. And where it is otherwise, let men  
 "cry out of *schism and faction* whilst they please. Jesus  
 "Christ will acquit his disciples, in the exercise of their  
 "liberty, and accept them in the discharge of their duty."  
 † Thus far the great Dr. Owen; who immediately adds,  
 that, "If it be said, that if all men be thus allowed to  
 "judge of what is *best for their own edification*, and to act  
 "according unto the judgment which they make, they  
 "will be *continually parting from one church unto another*,  
 "until all things are filled with disturbance and confusi-  
 "on; I say, (1.) That the contrary assertion, namely,  
 "that men are *not allowed to judge what is meet and best*  
 "for their own edification, or not, to *act according to the*  
 "judgment they make herein, may possibly keep up some  
 "churches, but is the ready way to *destroy all religion*.  
 "(2.) That many of those by whom this liberty is denied  
 "unto professing christians, yet do indeed take it for grant-  
 "ed, that they *have such a liberty*, and that it is their du-  
 "ty to make use of it: for what are all the contests be-  
 "tween the church of Rome, and the church of England, so  
 "far as christians that are not churchmen, are concerned  
 "in them? is it not in, whether of these churches *edifica-*  
 "tion may be best obtained? If this be not the ball be-  
 "tween us, I know not what is. — (3.) All christians,  
 "actually do so; they do judge for themselves, unless they  
 "are brutish; they do act according unto that judgment,  
 "unless they are hardened in sin, and therefore who do not  
 "so are not to be esteemed disciples of Christ. To sup-  
 "pose that all things of spiritual and eternal concernment,  
 "that men are not determined and acted, every one by  
 "his own judgment, is an imagination of men who think  
 "but little of what they are, or do, or say, or write.  
 "Even those who *shut their eyes against the light*, and  
 "follow in the herd, resolving not to enquire into any of  
 "these things, do it, because they *judge it is best for them*  
 "so to do. (4.) It is commonly acknowledged by pro-  
 "fessants, that private christians have a *judgment of dis-*  
 "cretion in things of religion. The term was invented  
 "to

to grant them some liberty of judgment, in opposition unto the blind obedience required by the church of Rome, but withal to put a restraint upon it, and a distinction of some Superior judgment, it may be, in the church or others. But to allow men a judgment of discretion, and not to grant it their duty to act according unto that judgment, is to oblige them to be fools, and to act, *not discretely*, at least not according unto *their own discretion*. (5.) The same is to be spoken of *gospel discipline*, without which neither can the duties of church societies be observed, nor the ends of them attained. The neglect, the loss, the abuse hereof, is that which hath ruined the glory of the christian religion in the world, and brought the whole profession of it into confusion. Hereon have the fervency and sincerity of true *evangelical*, mutual love been abated, yea, utterly lost: for that love which Jesus Christ requireth among his disciples, is such as never was in the world before, amongst men, nor can be in the world, but on the principles of the gospel, and faith therein. Therefore it is called his *new-commandment*. The continuation of it amongst the generality of christians, is but vainly pretended; little or nothing of the reality of it in its due exercise is found. And this hath ensued on the neglect of *evangelical discipline* in churches, or the turning of it into a *worldly dominion*. For one principle end of it, is the preservation, guidance, and acting of this love. That *mutual watch* over one another that ought to be in all the members of the church, the principal evidence and fruit of love without diminution, is also lost hereby. Most men are rather ready to say in the spirit and words of *Cain*, *Am I my brother's keeper?* than to attend unto the command of the apostles, *Exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin;* or comply with the command of our Saviour, *if thy brother offend thee, tell him of it between him and thee*. By this means likewise is the purity of communion lost, and those received principal members of churches, who by all the rules of *primitive disciplines* ought to be cast out of them." Dr. Owen has herein given so clear and full an answer to Mr. Fish's charges against us, that I could not forbear transcribing more than I at first designed: and let it be particularly noted, that either the neglect of *gospel discipline*, or the turning of it into a *worldly dominion*, is, (in the view of



of that eminent man of God) that which brings in *confusion* and *ruin* among christian professors : and he is so far from Mr. *Fish*'s mind, who makes the *separations* the chief cause thereof, that he says, \* " I do not know how far  
 " God may accept of churches in a very corrupt state, and  
 " of worship much depraved, until they have new means  
 " for their reformation. Nor will I make any judgment of  
 " persons, as unto their *eternal condition*, who walk in  
 " churches so corrupted, and in the performance of wor-  
 " ship so depraved ; but as unto them who know them to  
 " be so corrupted and depraved, it is a damnable sin to  
 " join with them, or not to *separate* from them. Rev. 18. 4.

I leave every rational soul to judge, whether there has not been many proofs already given, that the churches which Mr. *F.* pleads for, are greatly *corrupted* and *depraved*, in those very points which Dr. *Owen* speaks of. Our authors proceedings have often made me think of a man, who had a mind to beat his neighbour, and hastily takes a sword by the blade, to club the other with the hilt ; when 'tis only for the other to take hold of the hilt, and he may easily run the aggressor thro' with his own sword. For my part, I am but a poor soldier, and have a natural aversion to fighting ; yet since I have seen the truth, and people of God so much abused by Mr. *Fish* and his brethren, I must return the charge, both of *truce-breaking*, and *false-accusing*, to their own doors ; for their covenant as ministers, was to feed Christ's *sheep*, and *lambs* : but instead of that, how have the *green pastures* of experimental religion been trodden down, and the *deep water* fouled, i. e. the word of God corrupted by them ?

Mr. *F.*'s *nine sermons*, are a proper specimen of that treatment, which scattered Christ's sheep in that day : and ever since, these sheep used their christian liberty, † by joining together to worship God according to their own understanding of divine rule ; those ministers have been *false-accusers* of them, even down to this time. The ministers in *Windham county*, in their *association letter* against the separates say, p. 32. " Another of these false and  
 " evil principles, which some have drank in, and others  
 " are stricken with, is, that no other call is necessary to a  
 " persons

\* Ibid p. 52.

† Dr. *Owen* says of *sincere believers*, " That in these persons  
 " there resides an *indefeasible right* always to gather themselves  
 " into a church-state, and to administer all gospel ordinances,  
 " which all the world cannot deprive them of." Guide to  
 " fellowship, p. 52.

"persons undertaking to preach the gospel, but his being  
 "a true christian, and having an inward motion of the  
 "spirit, or a persuasion in his own mind, that it is the will  
 "of God he should preach and perform *other ministerial*  
 "*acts*: the necessary consequence of which is, that there is  
 "no standing instituted ministry, or order of men, peculi-  
 "arly appointed to that work in the christian church,  
 "known and distinguished from all others, by the visible  
 "laws of Christ's kingdom. From this falsehood (say  
 "they) chiefly have sprung up so many preachers and ex-  
 "horters who are unconvincible, and will hear no reason  
 "nor argument against their practice." Then they pro-  
 ceed to a long train of arguments to prove the gospel  
 ministry to be an institution of Christ.

But they might, with as much truth or propriety, have  
 charged the separates in general, with denying the Bible,  
 because they did not come to hear them explain or *corrupt*  
 it; and so have gone on to prove it to be the word of  
 God: for we have all along held, that gospel ministers are  
 "an order of men peculiarly appointed to that work in the  
 "christian church, known and distinguished from all others  
 "by the visible laws of Christ's kingdom," as strongly as they  
 do, who condemn us. 'Tis true we don't fix that *order* in ac-  
 cademical *degrees*, nor in a local *succession*; neither do we  
 know men to be Christ's ministers by their *dress*, or *titles*.  
 And 'tis acknowledged that "no arguments have convin-  
 "ced us," as yet, that any are true ministers, because they  
 have such a *spirit of discerning* as to see *covetousness*, in such  
 as choose to suffer spoiling of goods or imprisonment rather  
 than to pay what is demanded in an un-gospel way: while  
 at the same time they can't see it in themselves, tho' they  
 permit the widow and fatherless to be distrained upon,  
 rather than forego any part of what they first agreed for. Yea,  
 who can discern *covetousness* in ministers abroad, who ap-  
 pear willing to spend and be spent for the good of souls,  
 and make no demands, but only take what is freely given  
 them; and yet can't discern it at home, where they can  
*never have enough*, but are often urging for additions to  
 the sum they first bargained for. \*

M

Neither

\* Dr. Chauncy of Boston insinuates, that Mr. Whitefield was moved  
 to travel and labour as he did, "from the undue influence" of  
 "too high an opinion of his own gifts and graces;" and from a  
 regard to temporal gain. "No one, (says the doctor) I believe  
 "besides himself, can tell the *amount* of the *resents*, he received  
 "in

Neither are we convinced that those are following the humble Jesus, who accuse others with *pride* and *boasting*, who attempt to improve their gifts without the ministers licence, and aspire to such *greatness* as to *forbid* them : while they set up youths for ministers, who have not *gifts*, even after they have laid their hands on them, sufficient to teach publicly without *reading line by line* as children do their *lessons*.

I have observed that Dr. Chauncy himself owns, that 'tis "a real service to the cause of Christ to expose the characters of *visibly wicked ministers*, and lessen their power to do mischief." And had I not been convinced that we have many such in our land, who have been great causes of many *divisions* and *offences*, contrary to the *doctrines* of the gospel, who yet with *good words* and *fair speeches* deceive the hearts of the *simple*, I could by no means have been willing to have followed them so far thro' their winding labyrinths, many when they meet with the word *division* or *separation* in an ill sense, they readily apply it to such as the clergy have stigmatized under that name. "But alas!" (says Dr. Franck) we never enquire, who is the cause of the trouble. Not they, who earnestly contend for God's word, but they that will not receive it, are the cause of all the noise and disquiet, and therefore ought to be punished : but where the *wolf* is judge, the poor *sheep* always trouble the water." \*

For the association to represent, because we hold to an *internal call* into the ministry, that we hold to, "no other," is as unjust as it would be to assert, because we hold to *internal religion*, that therefore we hold to nothing *external*. And Mr. Fish is more inexcusable than they in saying we are "influenced rather by *inward impressions*, than by the plain word of God, or manifest pointings of providence. And don't hold to the necessity of *common learning* in ministers ; but say, the *less* of learning the *more* of faith." p. 139. 165. 177. For our sentiments have been published by various hands which express the contrary, and which, amidst all our mistakes, has been in a measure confirmed by our practice ; but it seems to

be "in this town, as well as in other places, for his *own proper use*." Chauncy's thoughts, p. 36, 37. If no others knew what Mr. Whitefield had freely given him ; why does the Dr. meddle with his *secrets* ? That other ministers are not content with what they bargain for, is no *secret*.



be beneath the dignity of these ministers, to take any notice of lay teachers writings, even tho' it be to correct their mistakes; (a notable proof of their *humility*!) And the chief which he advances against us before the world, is upon his word of honor. \* I must not therefore let another of his charges pass without notice.

While Mr. F. is essaying to open the *separated principles*, he says, " Their first minister in this place (i. e. Stanington ) was elected by *revelation*, which was after this manner. The brethren at a meeting, appointed for the purpose, having an *impression*, that if it was the Lord's will that they should have a minister, he would shew it to them, and *reveal* the *man's* name, or shew them *the very man*. Upon this, one of their number, in a vision or swoon, had a revelation, that he *himself* was to be their minister : but the brethren not having fellowship with him in his discovery, rejected *his* revelation ; tho' he declared to me he knew it to be from heaven. At the next meeting, and under the like *impression* in a trance or swoon, 'twas revealed to another brother that such a man, by name, was to be their minister ; with which they had fellowship : and *him* they chose, — ordain'd, — silenc'd, — cast out of their church, and delivered up to *satan*, in less than a year. p. 145.

As it happens, I was an eye and ear witness of the visible transactions of that meeting. (for tho' he makes it two meetings, it was but one) therefore I will give the plain state of the visible facts, leaving what is secret to others.

M 2

Mr.

\* A particular description of our sentiments concerning an *internal call* to preach the gospel, was published 14 years ago, and therein it was observed, " That holding to an *internal call* ; no way invalidates *external* ordination : for, as when a soul is converted, tho' he has an *internal* right to all the privileges of the church of Christ, yet he has not an *external* right thereto, till he is openly received as a *member* : so a person that is called to preach, has not a right to act in those things which are *peculiar* to an *officer* in the church, till he is publicly set apart therein." And a challenge was then made to *all men* to shew if they could, " That God has left it any more in the hands of any mortals, to say who shall be his *ministers*, and who not, than he has to say who shall be his *children*, and who not." It was observed that he has given *marks* whereby each may be known and received into their places. Now if these principles were false, would it not have become Mr. F. much better, to have pointed out wherein they are so, than to have cast out so many things against us, which we deny ? unless he could advance stronger proof therefor, than his bare word.

Mr. *Matthew Smith* of *Mansfield*, had preached upon trial, to that church, a considerable time, till they thought proper to appoint a meeting to seek for divine direction, and to proceed to the choice of a pastor, as they might have clearness; and there happened to be several other teachers present, one of which, when the question was asked about, what should be the *method* of proceeding, in choosing a pastor? Answered, that if any see it to be their lot, they should declare it. But little if any reply was made there-to; and soon after, this man fell into a strange frame, and then made the declaration which Mr. *F.* speaks of: which struck a visible damp upon the assembly, as being an *unexpected* thing, and none concurred therewith. And the rest of the day was spent in worship, till in, or near the evening, when some of the church got into a labour with some of their brethren, upon some of his moral conduct, which they judged not to be agreeable to rule: and at length he was brought to confess it, which gave as visible a quickening to their minds, as the other declaration had a damp; and a leading brother in the church being much overcome, took hold of Mr. *Smith* (who was expected before to be their minister) and told him he was the man to go before them; \* and all concurred therewith: and he was ordained Dec. 10. 1746. and he ministered in word and ordinances to them, till the spring 1749. Then he went off and left his flock; for which, after various labours with him, he was, by the advice of a council, excommunicated on July 20. 1750. as I had the account in a letter from a member of the council soon after, which letter is now before me. Three or four years afterwards, Mr. *Smith* returned and confessed his fault to the church, and they forgave him. The man also who made that declaration, has also seen clearly since how he was imposed upon then, as I have reason to think, from the account he gave me of it some years ago.

This is the true state of those affairs, as may be proved; and I leave the reader to make his own remarks. But O *New-England! New-England!* whither art thou fallen! Once it could be said of thee that, "No man became a  
" minister or communicant in thy churches, until he had  
" been severely examined about his regeneration, as well as  
" conversation; and if any minister did misbehave himself,  
" he soon heard of it, and became either a penitent, or a  
" deposed

\* Here note, this has not been our common method.

"*deposed members*" But yet now, those who are making some imperfect attempts, to restore that ancient discipline, are thus publicly *stigmatised* by one of thy ministers, who solemnly declares he does it with a good design, even to draw their picture to the life, — that they may be ashamed, p. 130. Yet as he has omitted two strokes in the colouring, which have often been given out from the pulpits in this land, and which have not been sufficiently detected to the public, I will take this occasion to correct them.

In order to shew the dreadful tendency of separations, ministers have often mentioned *Ward's* daughter that was taken from her husband, and *John Smith's* wife who was poisoned with *rats-bane*. The facts were thus; one *Ward* had met with the separates in *Attleborough* for a while, and had preached to such as would hear him; but he never was received into their church. He had one only child who did not live comfortably with her husband, and at length *Ward* took a fancy that she had not got the right man; and so took her away, and gave her to another: now tho' he was not a member with them, yet some of the brethren in *Attleborough*, went as neighbours, and laboured to convince him of his error; but he persisted therein, and in the event was forced to leave his country. *John Smith* was a member of Mr. *Pain's* church in *Canterbury*, but after a while he declared that 'twas revealed to him, that such a woman was to be his wife; and when he was questioned upon it, he said he did not pretend to put away the wife he then had, but providence would take her out of the way. This appeared so dark that the church called him to account for it, and the pastor (as he told me) openly told him in the church, that this principle carried murder in its nature; but he would not hear the church, and therefore was cast out. And three or four months after, he went to an apothecary at *Norwich*, and bought some *rats-bane*; with which 'twas supposed, the woman he had a fancy for, poisoned his wife; for which they were tried at *Windham* court; when (as I was credibly informed) they took off such as were separates from the jury; and, to the astonishment of many were acquitted; and afterward they were married together, but lived and died miserably. This

This is Dr. *Cotton Mather's* testimony, as it was cited by Dr. *Chauncy*, (p. 142.) to condemn Mr. *Whitefield* as uncharitable, for expressing his "fear lest many, nay most that preach in New-England do not experimentally know Christ."



is the open state of those *facts*; and yet they have been cast upon the *separates*, from one end of the land to the other, as evidences of the *bad tendency* of their *separation*!

However, this is no new thing; 'tis an old stratagem of those who have the *form* but *deny the power of godliness*, from whom we are required to *turn away*. But (said a great reformer in *Germany*) who but a mad man would charge Christ with the guilt of *Judas*? or blame the apostles and the godly presbyters of the church at *Ephesus* for that *out of their own selves* there did men arise *speaking perverse things*?

Now reader thou art to judge for thy self. I have joined issue with Mr. *Fish*, that the church of Christ in which his spirit dwells, has never been a *bitter, fierce, revengeful, persecuting church*: but the reverse. And he has exerted all his learning in an attempt to prove that the standing churches have that spirit, and that the separates have the contrary character. And he has advanced it as a principal evidence of their not having the spirit of Christ, that They endeavoured to draw off every true Christian, and would have left a congregation behind them, of nothing but *hypocrites and graceless persons*. This is brought to prove that they had not a *kind and charitable spirit*. But if he had reviewed a text that stands as a motto in his title page, which calls him to *measure the pattern*; and had observed that the rule given to measure the *form and fashion* of God's house by, with the *goings out and comings in thereof*, is, that, *The whole limit thereof round about shall be, MOST HOLY: behold, this is the law of the house*, Ezek. 43. 10—12. And also had taken notice, that the terms given to another prophet, upon which alone he should be God's mouth, were, *If thou take forth the precious from the vile*. (Jer. 15. 19.) And that the holy spirit expressly commands us in the new testament, to *Come out and be separate from unbelievers*; and to *turn away from those who have the form, but deny the power of godliness*. 2. Cor. 6. 14—17. 2 Tim. 3. 5. If he had duly observed these rules, how could he ever have charged the *acting upon them*, as the first evidence that those who acted so, had not the spirit that indicted them; but that they had an *unmerciful spirit* because they would not go with him and others in a contrary way?

Indeed the other text in his title page; (*They are not all Israel which are of Israel*;) plainly points us to the way that

that these ministers get along in, concerning the affairs. They confound the constitution of the Jewish and Christian church together; and shuffle and shift from one to the other, as occasion suits: and then charge us with not distinguishing between the *visible* and *invisible* church. They allow that the *invisible* church contains none but the *first-born* which are written in heaven. Heb. 12. 23. But they would have the *visible* church contain abundance more; and fly to the *Jews*, to *parables*, and to *hypocrites* to support their notions. Whereas the proper notion of *visible*, is the making manifest what was before *invisible*: hence says Paul, *with the heart man believeth*; and *with the mouth confession is made*. Therefore, an outward shew of what is not *invisibly* real, is *hypocrisy*. \* Thus while they accuse others with not distinguishing things, they *turn things upside down*, (Isai. 29. 16.) at a sad rate.

The only reason why any beside regenerate souls get into the *visible* church, is not owing to the *rule*, but to man's *imperfection* in acting upon it. Hence old Mr. Shepherd, in answer to this question: "Do not hypocrites, and no true members of Christ creep in?" says "yes: But if they could have been known to be such, they ought to be kept out; and when they are known, they are orderly to be cast out. Mat. 23. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Rev. 2. 20. Tit. 3. 10. † This is the sentence of one of the fathers who composed the *congregational platform*: and I know not of a single member in all our churches, who could not heartily subscribe thereto; and a principal cause of our separation was the *apostacy* (as I have shewn of those who still usurp that name) from these principles, even so far as to say by word and practice of the church, what Christ says of the world; *Let tares and wheat grow together*. And because we would not join with them in this *contradiction* of our Lord, they have *contradicted* that very command ever since in their practice.

Mr.

Mr. Clark of Salem, complains of Dr. Gill, as not distinguishing between the *external* administration, and *internal* efficacy of the covenant: and he says, "A man may be in the covenant of grace, in respect of its *visible* administration;—and yet he may not be in the covenant of grace in regard of its *spiritual* dispensation and efficacy. This is the case of all *close hypocrites*." And that is all the place in the covenant which I can find that he has got for unregenerate children. See his answer to Gill, p. 248.

† His sum of the christian religion, p. 25, 26.

Mr. Fish labours to prove, that we had a *bitter persecuting spirit*, because many called those ministers, Hirelings and blind guides, who were greedy of filthy lucre. p. 155. "It is acknowledged that we talk'd so, and thought so, concerning many of them, and retain such thoughts to this day; and the reader has now seen a little of our grounds for such thoughts. But we never thought so of all those who are called *standing ministers*. No, but still retain a hearty regard to many ministers and members in those churches as being saints; yet *truth* is not to be parted with, for the greatest, nor the best of men. When *Peter* and *Barnabas* were carried away with a *delusive* scheme of *confounding* the jewish and christian dispensation together, *Paul* withstood them to the face, because they *walked not uprightly according to the TRUTH of the gospel*. And would not give place by *subjection*, *no not for an hour*. Gal. 2. 5. 11. 14. yet our refusing subjection, and openly withstanding these ministers after several years trial, is "charged as a *rash and hasty* thing:" and Mr. F. tells much of the wrong manner of the separates behaving then.

To which I would say, I heartily concur with Mr. Prince that, "As for *spiritual pride* and *rash judging*,—some lately wrought upon, especially in *hours of temptation*, have grievously exceeded, yet some hopefully renewed are freer than others from those *excesses*:" and, says he, "I never knew the *most grown, humble and prudent saint* on earth wholly without them; for if I had I should hold perfection in the present state: much less can we expect the *new-born convert* to be so *humblewise*, &c. as *grown christians*." \* But tho' our author is forced to own, that the separates have considerable of a good temper and behavior among them now; yet after raking up many of the *rashest* things he could find in former times, he says, "Whatever *good things* they have among them, they have them not as *separates*:—The things that I have told you of above, are their *characteristicks*," p. 160. He even outdoes the *Jews*, for when they were afraid that a good work which Jesus had wrought, would be taken as an evidence for him; they said, *Give God the praise, we know that this man is a sinner*, John 9. 24. But now, he implicitly says, *give us the praise*; for he says, "I know not one *principle or practice* among them, that is agreeable to the gospel, but what they learned in our churches." p. 113.

\* Christian History for 1744. p. 405.



On the other hand *his party* have imprisoned at least *five* of our brethren only for preaching without their licence; \* and several scores of persons for ministers rates; beside several thousands of pounds worth of goods, which have been torn away for the same purpose: yet not a single instance is produced of the use of any violent methods on our side; not so much as to rescue any of those persons or goods, nor to revenge upon any for such injuries. Not unto us, not unto us, but to God's name alone belongs the glory that we have been thus kept. One of Mr. Fish's greatest proofs of the separates having a bad spirit, is some rash expressions a poor irishman used towards him at an ordination, which he says others did not rebuke him for: but I could have balanced them expressions with rash actions on his side. For at a separate ordination in May 1750, in a county town, after a stage was erected for the performing the work upon, and one of our elders had begun the worship of God, he was violently pulled down; and the stage torn to pieces, in the presence of the high Sheriff; one or more justices of the peace and the parish minister, who altogether did as little to check it, as our leaders did in the other case: and I could have balanced all his accounts at that rate. But I have no liking to that method: I would speak it to the honor of God, that in later years many of our rulers have acted worthily in their places, to check and restrain such abuses. And since Mr. F. grants that the separates are now, "very peaceable, kind, obliging good neighbours!" 'tis a public shame to him, and many of his brethren that they will not let them live so.

#### P A R T IV.

Remarks upon what Mr. F. has wrote concerning Baptism.

\*\*\*\*\* Various corruptions of the present day, I apprehend had not been opened and testified against, as they ought, which caused me to enlarge so upon them; but baptism has been so often treated upon by better hands, that I had tho'ts at  
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\* Mr. Thomas Marsh, Eliza Pain, and Solomon Pain at Windham, and John Pain, and John Palmer at Hartford. John Pain was confined 11 Months.

first of passing over what Mr. Fitch has said upon it, without notice: but for several reasons, I have altered my mind, and concluded to make a few remarks upon that part of his book also.

And the first remark I shall make is, that our author takes the method which many have done before him, and tries first to *inflame* people's natural *passions*, and then he is pretty certain to get his argument with them; for he says, "The church was always *fond* of her children, — And can we now, without *horror*, indulge the thought, either that Christ hath cast them off, or that the church is become as cruel as the *Ostrich*?" p. 28. And having spent a whole page in such *exclamations*, he then tells of "fairly arguing the points:" but if the first point is gained, that the baptists principles are *horribly cruel*, what room can be left for argument in the affair? for who will undertake to dispute for such principles? Satan himself pretends *kindness* and not *cruelty* in his inticements.

It is strange to see how great and good men have been *blinded* by this stratagem. Dr. Mather tell us, that Mr. Elliot published an answer to Mr. Norcott on *baptism*, and began it with these lines, viz. "The book speaks with a voice of a *lamb*, and I think the author is a *godly* though *erring brother*; but he acts the cause of a *roaring lion*, who by all crafty ways, seeketh to devour the poor *lambs* of the flock of Christ." \* Now the *lion* is praised for his *stately goings*, but who would dare to come near, or encounter with him, unless he had *David's* faith? Instead of that, each one is for keeping their distance, and endeavouring to secure themselves and their children against the *terrible* beast. Even so great a champion as Mr. Mitchel, found his courage fail in this matter. For, when Mr. Dunster, president of Cambridge college, embraced the *baptist* principles in 1653, and "thought himself under some obligation to bear his testimony in some sermons, against the administration of *baptism* to any *infant* whatsoever." † Mr. Mitchel, after he had been to talk with him, found that it caused him to *scruple infant baptism*, which he says, "Made me *fearful* to go needlessly to Mr. D. for me — thought I found a *venom* and *poison*, in his insinuations and discourses against *pædo-baptism*." ‡ And to secure himself against so great a danger, he says, "I resolved also on Mr. Hooker's principle, That I would have an argument, able to remove a *mountain*, before I would re-

\* Elliot's life p. 57.

† Mitchel's life p. 67. ‡ ibid p. 69.

"cede from, or appear against a truth or practice, received among the faithful." But how did he know that he was not resolving against the truth, and not for it? We have his reasons therefor under his own hand: when he had been to Mr. Dunster's, Dec. 24. 1653, he says, † "After I came from him, I had a strange experience; I found hurrying and pressing suggestions against *pædo-baptism*, and injected scruples and thoughts, whether the other way might not be right, and *infant baptism*, an invention of men: and whether I might with good conscience baptize children and the like. And these thoughts were darted in with some impression, and left a strange confusion and sickness upon my spirit. Yet methought, it was not hard to discern that they were from the *evil one*. First, because they were rather injected, hurrying suggestions, than any deliberate thoughts, or bringing any light with them. Secondly, because they were *unreasonable*; interrupting me in my study for the sabbath, and putting my spirit into confusion, so as I had much ado, to do ought in my sermon. It was not now a time to study that matter; but when in the former part of the week, I had given myself to that study, the more I studied it, the more clear and rational light I saw for *pædo baptism*, but now these suggestions hurried me into scruples.

Tho' this may have passed for good reasoning with many; yet should a *baptist* minister own that he had very much *scrupled*, whether his way was right or not, but had concluded the *scruples* were from the *evil one*, because they were attended with *confusion* and *darkness*, rather than *deliberation* in his mind; and did not come by his own reasonings, but by means of talking with a *great* and *good* † man, which happened not to be in the right time in the week, but too near the *sabbath*: and that therefore he was *resolved*, that he would have an *argument* able to *remove a mountain*, before he would recede from a *practice* which had been received as truth among his faithful fathers. Also that he was *fearful* of going near the gentleman who had been instrumental of shaking his confidence concerning that old *practice*. If a *baptist* should talk so, there would be enough ready to tell him, that it was his *striving* again *conviction*, that caused such confusion and darkness.

• Mitchell's Life p. 70.

† p. 68-69.

For Mr. Mitchell esteem'd and honored Mr. Dunster as such to his dying day, p. 70.



ness in his mind ; and we should heard more about the baptists being *wisful* in their way than we have done yet.

The Lord gave this reason to *Israel*, why they should not oppress a stranger, viz. *For ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.* And I find the truth of that word in the present case ; for I have gone thro' the same *hurrying and darkness*, upon this point, which Mr. *Mitchel* describes, and thought once that I had got clear of it, in the same way ; and also felt the like *fear* of disputing with others upon it, that he did. Neither was it any creature that stopp'd me at last, from going on in that way, No, but in my retired hours, this question was put to my conscience, (I believe) by him who made me, " where is it, and in what relation to the visible church do baptized infants stand, who are not *regenerated* ? " This I was not able to answer ; for it was a settled point with me before (as it was with Mr. *Mitchel*) that none but *new-born* souls ought to come to the *Lords Supper* ; and yet baptism is the first ordinance in a *christian* profession, and his notion of a *middle way*, between the church and the world, I could not justify : so that I found the *mountain* to be on the other side of the question ; and if Mr. *Hooker*, or any others could have helped me to an argument able to remove it, I should have gladly used it, rather than to be *turned about* again in this affair ; but tho' I sought diligently, by all means within my reach, for twelve months or more, yet I never could find such an argument. *Solomon* says, *The heart knoweth its own bitterness* : and none but they who have experienced the like, can tell what I then endured ; and instead of help from my brethren, they helped to increase the burden : for one would say, It was my lifting to the *baptists*, that caused all this difficulty : while another would be as confident that it was the *fear of men* that kept me from coming out in *believers baptism*.

Often did I think of *Job's* words, *Were your soul in my souls stead, I could heap words upon you.* I see now that the chief thing that held my mind so long in suspense, was not distinguishing as I ought between *men*, and the *rule itself*. For when I look'd into the word, I could read *believers baptism* plainly, and nothing plainly of bringing infants thereto ; but when I turned to look among *men*, so many *good* ones would be brought up on one side, and bad ones on the other, and I saw so much of a wrong temper in my *baptist* brethren who had come out lately, that I said

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in my heart, and I am afraid there is some secret mischief in that principle." And I never could obtain deliverance in this matter, till I was brought to *cease from man*, so as to leave good men and bad men out of the question, and come to this single point; *Nevertheless, what saith the scripture?* And there I obtained as clear establishment about baptism, as any other point in religion. And what I have endured, has taught me the vast importance of the divine caution which we have, against *judging the counsels of others hearts*. What they say and do, we have a warrant to judge upon, and to labour to convince them where we think they are in the wrong; but to charge them with being *biased* by corruption, if they don't presently yield to our arguments, as it is a violation of the law of God, so no tongue can express all the mischiefs which it has made among God's people, in all ages. And this admitting *men* for part of our rule, is the grand source of all the *abominations in the earth*. For wherever this enemy creeps in, among any denominations, it moves ministers and people to *slander* those who differ from them, and to have men's *persons in admiration* on their own side, *because of advantage*. Was it not this enemy which unawares moved Mr. *Mitchel* to say, "he found a venom and poison in the presidents insinuations." When his church were so "vehement and violent," against Mr. *Dunstar*, as to procure his removal, both from the college and from the town, he could see the evil there; and told his brethren, "That more of light and less heat would be better," for he esteemed his *inter* to be a "worthy and a godly man," p. 68. Had Mr. *Dunstar* fallen into any *scandal* afterward, is it not as likely we should have often heard of him, as we have of other *scandalous baptists*? But since it was otherwise, ministers have been so cautious of speaking of these things, that I suppose thousands,

The first part of the *Popes creed* is the same with *protestants*, and the first step he takes off from truth is, admitting the authority of *apostolical tradition*; and the next article is in these words, viz. "I do admit the holy scriptures in the *same sense* that the *holy mother-church* doth, whose business it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of them; and I will interpret them according to the unanimous consent of the *fathers*." Gordon's geography in his description of the religion of Italy, p. 177. And upon these *two pillars*, supported by *civil power*; stands the whole fabric of *superstition*, which would as certainly *fall*, if they were removed, as *over Dagon's temple* did in *Sargon's day*.

thousands, who have used his *version* of the *psalm* in their worship, never heard nor thought that the principal man, who composed them, openly renounced *infant baptism* soon after; tho' they have often heard the *mad-men* of *Munster*, cast as a reproach upon those who have no more concern with them, than their accusers have with the *builders of Babel*.

Mr. *Fish* proceeds with the like *caution*, when he has occasion to mention the president who succeeded Mr. *Dunstar*, in order to shew what regard the ancient church in *Plymouth* had for *learning*, he brings in "The great pains they took to obtain the learned and eminent Mr. *Charles Chauncy* (afterwards president of *Cambridge college*) of whose settlement with them, they were disappointed." p. 82. But he never gives the least hint, that the only reason given, for his not settling there, (in the account he takes this out of) is, that he held *baptism* "ought only to be by dipping or plunging the whole body under water," which appeared so necessary to Mr. *Chauncy*, that "he did not see light" to settle in a church where another practiced *sprinkling*, tho' he had liberty to act according to his own mind. \* This account of what was acted but 8 years after *Boston* was settled, would not answer, for one who was laboring to prove, that the holding *dipping* to be necessary in baptism, was a new notion of some ignorant, rigid people. If this be a fair use of *learning*, which he talks so much of, what can be unfair?

This reminds me of another of Mr. *F*'s exclamations; after he has spoken so much of the separates and baptists, he says, "What then is like to become of the cause that brought our pious fore-fathers into this land?" p. 182. Answer, the cause they came here for, was a reformation according to the word of God, and the first churches, both of *Plymouth* and *Boston*, expressly covenanted before God to embrace further light from his word, as it should be opened to them; and governor *Winslow* tells us, that Mr. *Robinson*, pastor of the *Plymouth people*, "charged them before God and his blessed angels," to act according to their covenant; "for he was very confident, the Lord had more truth and light yet, to break forth out of his holy word."† What an injury then is done to their character, as well as to our own souls, if we limit things to what they had attained, as if they did not mean to act as they said?

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\* Appendix to *Robbins's sermon* p. 5, 6.

† *New-England chronology*, p. 89. 90.



Many ministers in our country will tell people that a strong confidence that their souls are in a safe state, is hurtful; and that they must think that, possibly they are not right, in order to examine themselves: but in this case, all art must be used to prevent any scruples concerning infant baptism, before they examine it; so that they may not look into the bible, to see whether this principle is right or not, but only to find something, to prove it to be right, and to fortify them against the horrible errors of the baptists. And if any are resolved still to go on in that way, I leave them with Him who is able to convince them of the evil of such conduct: but if any are desirous to hear further of this matter, I would give them a few more of my thoughts, upon our author's manner of handling the scriptures, in this controversy.

He allows the baptists a place among the churches of Christ, and that they have "doubtless a number of godly persons among them," but says, "We must think they are in a grievous error, as to the matter in dispute between them and us." p. 96. And he directly repairs to the promise in Acts 2. 39. where he would have us take notice that, 'tis not said that the promise shall be to your children: but the promise is to your children," so it is, and as many as heard the call, and gladly received the promise, were baptized, and the same day were added to the church, even such as should be saved. And there is not a word of the baptizing any but such, in the whole context. Mr. Fish says this would put believers children upon "a level with the heathen, who also shall be interested in the promise, upon their believing." p. 97. And will he pretend that any are interested in the promise of remission of sins and the gift of the holy Ghost, beside true believers? He says this is the promise made to Abraham: let it be so. Paul tells us, that Christ was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles, through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the spirit thro' faith. The blessing comes thro' Christ, and is received only by faith. A few verses forward Paul says, The scripture hath concluded ALL under sin, that the promise might be given to them that believe: and concludes the chapter with saying, if ye be Christ's, THEN are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE. Gal. 3. 13, 14, 22, 29. The promise, is of the gift of righteousness, and abundance of grace, which is only received by faith; how vain then are all the pretences, that any are heirs of promise.

*promise, but believers?* The complaint against setting all men upon a *level*, in their natural state, is as old as *christianity* itself: for the very work of the *messenger*, who came before Christ's face, was to *level* all outward distinctions in the world: and nothing was more offensive to the *Jews* than the freedom which our Lord discovered towards *publicans and sinners*; and the *Jews* conceit that they had a better claim to the *promise*, than *such persons*, was the grand obstacle in the way of their *believing in Jesus*; and so was the *bar* that shut them out of the *kingdom of heaven*. And what less than this are those doing, who conceit that *natural birth*, or any thing *done by creatures*, gives them or theirs any better claim to that *kingdom* than *other sinners*? *Paul* was taught the pernicious effects of that *conceit*, and therefore engaged against it with all his might, and proved to the *Romans*, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were all *under sin*: to the *Ephesians* that, *We ALL were by nature the children of wrath, EVEN as others*; and to the *Galatians*, (as was just observed) that *all were concluded under sin*, that the *promise* might be given to them that *believe*. And the very occasion of his laboring as he did with the *Galatians* was because of some who *desired to make a fair shew in the flesh*, by introducing the *national plan* under the *christian* name: but tho' *Peter* and *Barnabas* were *carried away at first* with this scheme; yet he *withstood them to the face*, and shewed them that this was *building again the things which once they destroyed*; which things he expressly points out to be the *difference* between *Jews by nature*, and *sinners of the Gentiles*. Gal. 2. 15.

What then shall we think of Mr. Fish, who declares that the *promise* "remains in full force to your children, upon your becoming christians, as it did while Jews?" And again that the *gospel charter*, "secures the blessings of the covenant to children, in the same breath that it does to the parents." p. 31. 100. If this is not *building the middle wall of partition* between the *children of professors*, and *others*, I desire to know what it is. That wall which Christ has *broken down*, (Eph. 2. 14.) and his apostles *destroyed* it; yet men have got to *building it again*. And we are told, that 'tis for very good ends too; one of which is to keep children under "the faithful authoritative watch and discipline of the church." p. 99. These are fine words; but what is there in it, in our day more than empty words? They tell us of some *actings* of this nature in former times, but now they are only great *swelling words*.

But

But should they attempt to bring them into *action* now, Mr. F. owns in the same page that, "The jurisdiction of the church reaches no further than to her members." And he else where disowns the name of a *half-way covenant*, p. 92. therefore they must be dealt with as *complete members*; and if they will come into *action* upon this plan, then people will see where they are, and no longer be amused with the name of *congregational churches*: for this is as truly a *national plan*, as ever was in *England* or *Judea*: and then he must have his own question returned, "What is like to become of the *cause* that brought our pious fore fathers into this land?"

In order to shew the dreadful effects of our principles, Mr. F. says, we not only deprive our children of the church-watch, but implicitly bid them to go and serve other gods. This he says is the consequence; "If I am not out in my reasoning. p. 99. A caveat well put in; for it would make many suspect him to be out of his reason, as well as out in his reasoning, to suppose that, the not treating persons as Christ's servants till they gave evidence of their being such, implied a bidding them serve other gods.

Again (says he) by denying their children the covenant and seal, they do eventually deprive them of the bible. — of a preached gospel, and all appointed means of grace." and cites, Rom. 3. 1, 2. to prove it. and says, "Upon the whole, may it not be said, of their church, that it is like a flock without lambs, a vineyard without seed, an orchard without a nursery? &c. p. 100.

I would answer these queries by putting others. Does learning consist in words or in ideas? And does not every husbandman know, that lambs will become sheep, and a nursery, apple trees without any other change but natural growth? and do persons become Christ's sheep in such a way? He said to a ruler of the Jews, That which is born of the flesh, is flesh: marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. And have we masters in New-England, that don't know these things? As to the bible and other means for conversion, who will say that children may not attend those means as well without sprinkling as with? And Paul assures us, that the chief advantage of the circumcised children lay therein; and none but such might enjoy those means, in the national church. The apostles first commission to preach, was limited to the house of Israel: but since the middle wall of partition is broken down, the gospel is preached freely to every creature. As to our

author's



author's notion of *securing* these privileges to children by an outward *seal*; we have proof enough in our land, that it is not putting water on childrens heads that will either *secure* their adherence to *sound doctrine*, or *secure* divine blessings to their *unbelieving* souls.

Many, in order to make out some singular advantage to baptized infants, will reach forward to another world; and say that if they die in infancy they have good hope for them, but for others they have none; unless it be from the *uncovenanted* mercy of God. I wish they would explain what they mean: if they mean his *sovereign* mercy, I confess all my hopes for my self, as well as children are derived from thence. To suppose that the *work done*, upon the child, *conveys* *grace*, is *naked* *popery*, and to pretend to tell of a difference in their future state, as the *certain* consequence of any *outward* performance of creatures, is not *two pence* better. \* Some in our parts have lately said, they could not pray for unbaptized infants; and yet at the same time pretend to be servants of him, who came to *seek and save that which was lost*. I don't charge Mr. F. with this; only take this occasion to testify against such abominations. Others who are not so corrupt, say we must do our duty to our children, and leave the event with God; but the difficulty is to prove this to be duty. All must allow that infant baptism is not *expressed* in scripture, tho many think it is *implied* therein; but we have found a very great difference between the *jewish* and *christian* constitution of the church, and in particular as to hearing the *oracles* of God. What godly people have mainly fixed upon, as the advantage of bringing children to this ordinance is, the *obligation* which 'tis supposed both parents and children are laid under thereby.

Mr. F. says, "Are not the reins of family government and discipline, thrown too much upon the neck of children?" We have a book intitled "The baptism of infants a reasonable service, founded upon scripture, and undoubted *apostolic* tradition;" which was first printed in *London*, and has been lately reprinted in *Boston*, which many of our ministers have been fond of. The author of that piece, gives it as his mind, that all who die in infancy will have a state of *probation* in another world, and that those who are baptized will have a *better* state for trial than others. Here is a *sacrament* among protestants founded partly on *tradition*, and a *state* is told of in the other world between *hell* and a fixed state of happiness in *heaven*, where infants are to have advantage by what ministers do here. O! tell it not in *Italy*, publish it not in the streets of *Rome*!

"dren (there being no covenant bonds to hold them)?" And "is not family prayer sadly neglected among the baptists? and are they not commonly defective in their religious observation of the Lord's-day?" p. 101.

Answer, It is to be lamented that these evils too much prevail in all parts of the land, among all denominations; but I have reason to think there is a considerable reformation, on these accounts, among the baptists lately. O may there be much more! A few considerations on *family prayer*, which I thought duty to publish two years ago, were at their desire printed at *Newport*, and have been kindly received in that colony; for which I am bound to give thanks to God. And I hope my fathers and brethren, will yet be more engaged by an agreeable walk, to cut off occasion from them who desire occasion, and give evidence to all, that believers baptism has no natural tendency to make people neglect the duties of private or public religion: The joining of these evils with the very name of a *baptist*, has long been an engine to guard peoples minds against looking into their true sentiments; whereas there is no more natural relation between those evils, and our principle about *baptism*, than there is between true *learning* and a *haughty persecuting* behaviour; which have often been put together on the other hand. \*

Upon a close view, I am fully convinced that our fathers were greatly mistaken in this matter, and the effects plainly evidence it; for, 1. How often can we hear these children of the church making remarks on the loose walk of professors,

O 2

\* The sentiments of our *baptist* brethren in *England*, who have had long experience in these things, as they were published in a *letter of advice* to their brethren, from an assembly of 15 churches, met at *Burton in Gloucestershire* Aug. 16. 1765. I will give a little extract from.—“Take care of stretching your family worship to an unreasonable length, or performing it unseasonably: let it not be defer'd too late in the morning, lest your hearts should be engaged in the hurries of business, and entangled in the cares of the world; nor put it off till the last thing in the evening, lest you should be overcome with drowsiness, and thus yawn out a prayer, instead of groaning out one. Be strict in observing the weekly day of rest, and not content-ed with attending upon public worship, let it be the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings: Keep your children and servants much under your eye: insist upon their remembering something of what they have heard: put them upon reading the scriptures; what is above their capacities explain to them, and close the day with recommending them to God,”

fessors, but if they are turned to their own walk, they are ready to reply, *I am no professor*; plainly supposing that their *obligation* to regard divine rule, depends on their *own act*; for they naturally imagine that they have as good a right to act for themselves *now*, as their parents had to act for them in *infancy*. Paul, when speaking to *heathens*, reminded them that we are the *offspring of God*, and therefore are under *indispensible obligations* to seek him, and act as *dependent* creatures on him, in whom *we live, and move, and have our being*. Act. 17—27. 29. And he urges on *christians*, the importance of giving *more earnest heed*, to the things revealed in the gospel, from the consideration of the *greatness* of the things in themselves; the *evidence* they come with; the *importance* of them to us, and the *account* we must give for them, or for our *neglect* of them. Heb. 2. 1—3. These are striking considerations indeed: but to fix the *obligation* upon an *act* that is never expressed in the whole bible, has rather a tendency to guard against conviction, than to cause a true sense of duty; especially if we observe, 2. That when people have a few *outside* things, they are apt to think that they are, either *safe*, or in a *fair way* for it: which is exactly the foundation error of the *Pharisees*, who were *blind*, because they did not first cleanse that which is *within*, that the *outside* might be *clean also*. Matt. 23. 26. Many have seen the danger of this, who at the same time did not see how their principles would lead to it. Mr. Willard of Boston, after a long discourse upon *renewing covenant*, in the year 1680. wherein were included *parents* and their *children*, yet says, “To confide in these *outward* enjoyments, as if they were “*real* assurances of God’s complacency, is not *faith* but “*presumption*”:—And yet, says he, what more common “then for the children of men thus to *delude* themselves “with such opinions? To trust in church privileges, as it “is the *most dangerous*, so it is the *most common* mischief “and misery of a people in visible covenant: God calls “it, to *trust in lying words*, Jer. 7. 4. And it was a ground “of the *Jews* ruin.” p. 63, 64. What then are men doing, who would labour to get persons into the church, before they have any proper evidence that they have *first trusted in Christ*!

Mr. F. appears a little more cautious of asserting things against the baptist, than against separates. He says, “Let me be corrected, if I charge them wrongfully. Is not a “*learned, able ministry*, too lightly set by, and very “*rarely to be found*, among those churches?” p. 101.

Answer,



Answer, several who have formerly sent their sons to college, have been disappointed, as the clergy have found means to draw them over to their party; which has discouraged others from sending their sons. And the baptists in general have been so much abused, by those who boast of their learning, that 'tis not strange if many were prejudiced against such men; yet they have had some that the world calls learned men, from the beginning; and lately have begun a college of their own, which bids fair to increase; \* but I hope they may never imagine to confine Christ or his church, to that, or any other human school, for ministers.

In order to shew how poorly furnished our churches are with teachers, Mr. F. tells a story of his conversing with one of them, who held that those words, *Drink ye all of it*, proved that they must eat and drink up all the elements, that are set apart for the *Lord's-supper*: and represents it as the common practice among our churches. p. 101. In answer to this, I can tell him truly, that I have been acquainted with a great part of the baptist in New-England, these 18 years, from Connecticut river to Piscataqua, and I never heard of such a practice among any of them, till I heard it from his book: therefore I leave him to instruct or correct his acquaintance, but I would have him get more learning, before he attempts again to reproach those he don't know.

Having given such an account of the baptist, he concludes, that many good things are left, and no good thing gained by going over to them, unless theirs is the only scriptural mode. Upon this he says, "Let us impartially examine the scripture," p. 102. And he goes on to examine the text, that speaks of our Lord's going out of the water, so impartially, that he says, "This text affords not the least shadow of proof for plunging," p. 105. This conclusion he draws from Mat. 4. 25. and Luke 2. 4. where the word *apo*, is translated, *from*: from whence he concludes that the other text means no more than *from* the water. Now let us not jest with scripture, but we'll suppose a critick, like our author, had been at New-London when he came there to get his book printed, and had asked, whence it came? and he had replied, *From Stonington*. Then, says the critick, you have not been

\* The charter for it was granted in February 1764, by the general court of Rhode-Island colony; and Mr. James Manning of Warren, is now president thereof.

into the town. Yes, says he I came *from* my own house in the further part of the town. What lodgings, then, (says the other) have you *by* your house? for I perceive you did not come *out of* it, but only *from* it?

If this be the learning which Mr. F. speaks so much of, he is welcome to it all: yet after he has spent eight pages in this *impartial* examination, (wherein he says, "We choose the mode of *sprinkling* or *washing* as most decent," p. 110.) he concludes that he has "made it appear, *beyond contradiction*, that *plunging* in baptism, is no ways *essential*:" and says they are, "*fairly* licensed,—even by those very texts (as they stand in the original) upon which they rely." p. 111.

I confess it might seem ill manners, to proceed in a dispute, after a person is *fairly silenced*; yet I remember they used to allow the *Indians* to ask questions, after they had been preaching to them: I shall therefore take that liberty.

And *first*, I would ask this teacher how he came to, as he says, "*learned enemies*, who *make havock of the church*, do? whose language according to his own account, p. 176, is, "You don't rightly understand your bible: 'tis *this* and *so* in the original; the meaning of *this* and *that* text, is "not as you take it; but just the reverse, or very different." He asks whether we must not run back to the *standing churches* for help in such a case? I believe not; but I will tell him what I have once done. When the ministers of *Norwich* and one from *Preston*, joined and made some *additions* to Mr. *Dickinson's dialogue*, and got it reprinted, I sent one of them to Dr. *Gill*, who had answered the dialogue before; but when he observed that they have added in page 5, that "*St. Irenæus*, who lived about 14 years after Christ;—says in his epistle ad Rom. lib. 5. "The church received a tradition from the apostles, to administer baptism to little children or infants." The doctor ordered an advertisement to be inserted at the end of one of his books, wherein, after mentioning this passage, he "*charges* it as a *forgery*, there being *no such passage* in all the works of *Irenæus*; and Dr. *Gill* defies the above gentleman, and the whole literary world to produce or point out, *any such passage* in *Irenæus*, or *any book or chapter* of his, of such a title, in which this pretended passage is said to be." And with this, he sent me another book, wherein he declares to the world, that all the *Greek Lexicons* which he ever saw make the primary sense of the word *baptize*, to be to *dip*; and to *wash* by consequence: but

but that it never means to *pour* or *sprinkle*; and if there are any *lexicons* which give a different sense of the word, he desires they may be pointed out.

A second question I would ask is, how our author and his brethren came to depart in this case, from the general rule; of interpreting obscure places by those which are plain? It is well known that the meaning of words is most plain, where they are used in their *literal* sense, and commonly, but part of their meaning is refer'd to, when used in a *figurative* way. As for instance, the metaphor of a *thief*, and of an *unjust judge* is refer'd to by our Lord, to shew the *suddenness* of his coming, and the *prevalence* of *importunity*: but what blasphemer will dare to apply the whole meaning of those words either to the Father or to the Son? yet in the case before us, all arts are used to *darken* texts which speak of *baptism* in the *literal* sense, and then we are turned to places where the word is used in a *figurative* way, in order to decide its true meaning. The *overwhelming* sorrow of Christ; and his disciples being *filled* with the holy Ghost, are called *baptisms*; and Mr. F. would point us only to the *way* or *manner* of its *coming*, and not to their being *filled* or *overwhelmed* therein, and then says, "There was nothing in either of those *baptisms*, that so much as look'd like dipping." p. 107. What! *nothing* like it! when in a plain prophecy of Christ, 'tis said, *The waters are cast in unto my soul*;—*I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me*, Psalm 69. 1, 2. Thus he denies what is in the bible; but at other times would have us read what never was there: for in the same page he refers us to Mr. Dickinson's dialogue, who in speaking of *Israel's* being *baptized* to *Moses*, leaves out all the circumstances of their going *into*, and coming *out of*, the sea, and having the waters on *each hand*, and the cloud *over them*: I say, he leaves all these out, and then tells us of "rain from the cloud," which the bible speaks nothing of. Thus these men who are so much confin'd to what they have written, in their teaching, can read to the people what God never wrote in his word!

My third question is this; Can they find one instance that God ever instituted an ordinance without shewing the manner how it should be perform'd? will they say that Christ appointed the matter of the ordinance of the supper to be bread and wine, but left the church to decree rites and ceremonies concerning the manner of its performance? The initiation ordinance of the jewish church was a bloody sign



sign, and the learned tell us that it took its name from the manner of its performance, as the word *circumcision* signifies "to cut all round." Now if any had taken a fancy then, that the substance of the ordinance was its being a bloody sign, and that the mode was no great matter, and thereupon had attempted to administer it by pricking instead of cutting, or by cutting across instead of cutting all round, would that have been *circumcision*? I presume none will say it would. Neither (I believe) will they pretend, that cutting any other part of the body would have done beside the *foreskin*. And who will venture to contradict the Bible, and say, Jesus was less faithful than Moses, in appointing the orders of his house? Heb. 3. 5, 6.

And let me ask those who hold that if water is used in the sacred name 'tis baptism, tho' it be done by sprinkling or pouring, whether they think Paul understood what he said when he calls baptism a burial? Rom. 6. 4, 5. Indeed Mr. Dickinson says, "It is most evident that this text has no reference at all to,—any particular mode of administering that ordinance, but the plain manifest scope of the words, is to shew us our obligation by baptism, unto a conformity to the death and resurrection of Christ, by dying unto sin, and rising again unto newness of life." Answer, 'tis readily granted that this is his scope, but do they suppose that learned Paul had such a scope with him as to use words without any reference to their true meaning? Common people know, that when they bury a man they never expect to see him return to his old way of living again; and that when they plant corn they expect its next appearance will be by a new growth: and how striking from hence is the argument to engage baptized believers to walk in newness of life? But now, forsooth, Paul must be thought to apply the words buried and planted to baptism, when sprinkled and washed, would have done as well or better! such advances have men made in learning since Paul's day!

Before we leave this point, I would ask these learned gentlemen how they came to know which part of the body they should apply water to? Circumcision was in a secret part, and they often tell us that baptism comes in its room. If washing be baptism, Jesus washed his disciples feet, but I don't read that he washed their face: how then did they come to know that sprinkling the face was baptism?

However

• Cruden's Concordance at the word *circumcision*.

However I must stand no longer here, for Mr. F. says, to be consistent, we must "unchurch all the christian world except ourselves; yet, says he, as our religion does not oblige us, so we are not disposed to treat them with like severity." p. 96. Here then, if we will take his word for it, he and his brethren have much more charity than the poor rigid baptists: but as this has long been an engine to keep people in darkness, I shall, as help may be offered, freely and distinctly give my thoughts upon it.

1. What do men mean by unchurching others? Paul would have every man fully persuaded in his own mind; and act accordingly, so as not to condemn himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he shews, that he which doubteth whether a thing be right or not, and yet does it, is damned or condemned therefor. Rom. 14. 5, 22, 23. Yet modern charity will condemn all who dare to think and act contrary to the established religion. Every soul that ventures to see with its own eyes; so far as they discover and act upon truth, they like Noah do therein condemn all the world who act contrary thereto; which renews the old complaint, *Thou reproachest us also.* And what then? Mr. F. condemns us as much as we do him. No, says he, we are not obliged nor disposed to treat them with like severity: but if we read on, we shall find he has told the world that he has proved beyond contradiction that we are wrong, and has fairly silenced us, and therefore has warned all not to hear us any more: and what separate or baptist in New-England, has done more or so much as this towards unchurching any other sect whatsoever?

Will he admit any into his community without he thinks they are baptized; or without they will conform to the orders of his church? I believe not. And if we have not the same liberty, where is liberty of conscience gone? If he thinks our consciences are erroneous; we are as fully persuaded his is so; and we are labouring to convince each other: and does not he unchurch us, as much as we do him? Indeed he gives it in his preface, as a great reason of his writing, that two thirds of his people have left him: but that only proves we have been more successful than he has: and does that excite his envy? All unscriptural methods to gain a party ought to be exposed and condemned; that is what each side have taken their turns to labor upon: and has not one as good a right to do so as another? Those who creep into houses, and resist the truth, God says, *Their folly shall be manifest unto all men.* So that they

who are upon the truth, have vastly the advantage of those who resist it, and need not fear a being unchurched by them. And is not our author somewhat *inconsistent* with himself, while he is telling what we must do to be *consistent*? for he tells abundance of what *weak* and *ignorant* teachers we have; and yet anon they are so *crafty* that he durst not venture his people to go near them, lest they should be *deceived* by them. Therefore, 2. Does not the core of all this difficulty lie in this, that common people claim as good a right to judge and act for themselves in matters of religion, as civil rulers or the learned clergy? It has a *shew* both of *wisdom* and *humility* to appoint those, who know more than we do, to judge and act for us; and it has more than a *shew* of them, often to do so in temporal things: but in religion it is a most dangerous snare. Fathers have a right to see and act for their children in many cases; but in this matter Jesus says, *call no man your father upon the earth.* Mat. 23. 9. And Paul spends a whole chapter in labours to expose and guard against this very snare. Col. 2. He speaks highly of the *order* of that church, and of the *steadfastness* of their *faith in Christ*, and exhorts them to *walk in him* as they *received him*. And all saints know that when they received Christ, they had no creature to see for them, but each soul acted as singly towards God, as if there had not been another person in the world: well says the apostle, *So walk in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* Beware lest any man spoil you thro' philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily: and ye are COMPLETE in him, which is the HEAD of all principality and power. Now if each saint is complete in him which is the Head of all wisdom and power, then they have no need of philosophers to see for them, nor of princes to give them power to act for God: but they freely confess with their mouths, what they believe in their hearts, and so their hearts are comforted, being knit together in love, and are built up together, as they have been taught. And as those saints had received the substance of what was shadowed forth in *circumcision*, and had declared in their baptism, that they were dead to the body of sin, and to the worship of the worldly sanctuary; the apostle says, Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ, from the rudiments of the world; why as tho' living in the world are ye subject to ordinances, —after the com-  
mandments



mandments and doctrines of men : which things indeed have a shew of wisdom and humility.

Now as this warning was openly given, it would not do for men to act against it in plain terms ; yet those who were vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds, conceited that the ordinances which Jesus had instituted after he had blotted out the old hand writing, were too few and plain, and the worship too spiritual to consist with that great maxim, That christian privileges are greater than jewish privileges were ; therefore their philosophy was set to work upon the deceitful line of making jewish ordinances, shadows of christian ordinances, instead of owning them to be shadows of spiritual and inward realities : and so making Abraham's household which first constituted that church, a shadow of christians natural offspring, instead of viewing it to be a shadow of the household of God, which constitutes the gospel church. Eph. 2. 19, 20. And having by this art got the relics of that old covenant which Jesus had blotted out and nailed to his cross, it hath made room for the exertion of all their learning to write upon it, and contend about it ever since.

Mr. Dickinson says, " The patent sealed by baptism is (so to speak) the very same parchment that was given to Abraham ;—there is nothing altered, but the seal only." Dialogue, p. 17. And Mr. F. plainly holds things in the same line ; and therein, he and his brethren appear to be in a fair way to bring that upon themselves which they would charge upon us. For on the same parchment it was written, than none but the sons of Aaron should minister in the sanctuary ; and it has already been proved that when they came out of Babylon, those children of the priests, who could not find the register of their genealogy down from Aaron, were as polluted put from the priesthood. And the christian church has been thro' a more dreadful captivity since the apostle's days, than that of the Jews in Babylon ; therefore, according to this rule, all ministers who can't shew their registers of an uninterrupted succession from the apostles, must as polluted be put out of their places, and then I believe in my heart, there would not be one minister left upon the face of the earth. It will not do here, to fly to don't knows and suppositions, because we have renounced the doctrine, of ignorance being the mother of devotion.

What poor work then are our ministers like to make of it ; for when they come to trace their line back ; the Lord-Bishops claim a higher title, and an older right to this parchment, than they, and are now making attempts to

ever run them. And the *episcopacy* has got as many or more orders of office than were among the *priests* and *levites*, yet instead of a *high priest*, they have a *secular prince* as their head. And they formerly separated from the *pope*, who was let up to answer to the *high priest* in the *old testament*; and when we come to him, he has such a *voluntary humility*, that he must *worship* angels, in order to get them to go to Jesus for him. And what an awful *succession* is here, left between private members, and Jesus their glorious head?

Therefore says *Paul*, *Let no man judge you, — let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, — And not holding the head from which all the body has nourishment.* Col. 2. 16, — 19. *Peter* and other apostles to whom the *keys* were given to open the mysteries that were contained under those ancient types, assure us that *Aaron* was a type of *Jesus Christ*, and his children a type of *Christ's children*, who are born of the spirit; and *Peter* says to such, ye also as *living stones*, are built up a *spiritual house*, an *holy priesthood* to offer up *spiritual sacrifices*, acceptable to *God* by *Jesus Christ*. 1 Pet. 2. 5. And now we will turn our opponents own arguments back to where they belong. No *strangers* or *bastards* were allowed to come into *God's sanctuary*; where then is any room allowed for unregenerate persons, be they great or small, in this *spiritual house*? *God* says of the *new covenant*, when the *old one* vanished away, *They shall all know me from the least to the greatest.* Heb. 8. 11.

Again, these ministers often tell of *David's* error in putting the *ark* into a new cart which was drawn by oxen, instead of laying it on the priests shoulders; but in this light, what will become of their *invented schemes*, supported and drawn by *earthly powers*, instead of resting the cause of *truth* where *Paul* did, in the church, which is the *pillar and ground* of it; or where *Peter* did on the shoulders of this *holy priesthood*? Saints are often called *priests*, but ministers as distinguished from other christians, are never once as I can find, called *priests*, in all the new-testament. Men's *carts*, both *new ones* and *old ones* are *breaking at this day*, which is a token that they will all be *removed*, as things that are *made*, that those things which *cannot be shaken may remain*. Even *Christ's supreme power* to govern all, and to call whom he pleaseth out of the world unto himself, and the *subordinate power* which he hath given to them to confess him in the world, and open-

ly to join in his worship, and to call and constitute in office such men as he has qualified therefor, and to remove from office such as are contrary to his divine rules, without dependence on any other power. This I believe is the kingdom which cannot be moved; and is certainly the foundation which the fathers of this country built upon, and those who have now got upon another footing may paint the fathers' sepulchres as much as they please, yet their foundation will be *overflowed with a flood*; and the *wood hay*, and *strubble* of such as are on the *sure foundation* will all be *burnt up*; but *themselves shall be saved*; yet so, as by *Isr.*

This leads me, 3. To observe that tho' tis an incredible thing with many, that good men should err so far as to change that, which an ordinance took its name from; or that those who practice so, can have the divine presence; yet we have plain proof of both in the divine oracles.

It was God's express command, that three times in the year all the males in his ancient church, should appear before him; the last of which times was at the feast of *tabernacles*, which took its name from the *mode* which he ordered it to be kept in, viz. That they should dwell in *booths* for *tabernacles* all the time of the feast. But soon after *Israel* had got settled in *Canaan*, they altered that *mode*, and it was not recovered again for about a thousand years; namely from *Joshua's* time, till after their *habitations* had lain *desolate* 70 years. Neh. 8. 17. *Solomon* dedicated the temple at this feast, tho' as they had dropt the *manner* of keeping of it, which it took its name from, so it is *no more*

called

Were it worth while we might compare notes with these ministers as to an external succession; for Mr. *Hanserd Knollys*, and Mr. *John Miles*, were educated at the same *Universities* and ordained by the same *Bishops*, that other ministers were; who came to this country; and Dr. *Mather* calls them *Godly separatists*, and says "Both these have a respectful character in the churches of this wilderness." *Magnalia*, book III. p. 7. Mr. *Miles* was pastor of the first baptist church in the *Massachusetts* province, and liv'd near that which is called *Miles's Bridge* in *Somerset*. Now the man who gave the charge in the first separate ordination at *Mansfield*, had been an ordained elder among the baptists; and I suppose there has never been one ordination among us since, without an ordained elder to assist in it. So that our opponent will have hard work to prove that our line ever was broken according to his own notion of it; while we have many plain instances of it on his side. Mr. *Fitch* the first minister at *Newwich*, (who was as much accounted of in his day as any minister in that county which Mr. *Fitch* belongs to) was ordained by the church, 40 years after our fathers first came to *Plymouth*.



called by that name, but is called the *feast* in the *seventh month*. 1 Kin. 8. 2. Yet how remarkable were the tokens which they enjoyed of God's presence at that feast! These things if rightly viewed, would sweep off abundance of stuff that is brought up in our day, to frighten people from seeing the truth, or from acting upon it when 'tis seen.

Dare any pretend that they have equal evidence of the divine presence in sprinkling for baptism, with what *Israel* had at that feast? or that any have practised it, who equalled *David* for devotion, or *Solomon* for wisdom? yet the poor captives who returned from *Babylon* were not deterred by such great characters, from returning to an exact conformity to divine rule. 4. As the baptists are often represented as the most rigid of all sects, I will briefly touch upon some plain evidences to the contrary. The reader may remember how shockingly Mr. Robbins of *Bransford* was treated by the *consociation* for his preaching among the baptists. And tho' the separates set out, and for some years practised free communion with the baptists, and the bars were broken down, so that they were admitted to free and successful labors in many baptist societies, and they went on comfortably together, till by this freedom many were brought into such an acquaintance with the baptist principles, as to embrace and practice them; yet that made a great difficulty, and several were censured by churches and councils, for leaving infant baptism: upon which many attempts were made for accommodation, till at length a baptist elder refused to act in an ordination with an elder of the other denomination, because he thought that elder had in several instances injured the baptists and their principles. This caused hard contention between the two elders, and they joined and called all these churches together, to hear the affair: which was the largest meeting we ever had since the beginning of the separation.

The meeting was at *Stonington* on May 29, 1754, where the messengers of about 35 churches came together; and labored in conference upon these affairs three days; and in the close of the meeting, several of the most noted leaders on the side of the pædo-baptists openly declared that tho' they could yet commune with saints who did not see light for infant baptism, yet they did withdraw the hand of fellowship from all such as professed to see that there was no warrant for bringing infants to that ordinance. And thus the breach appeared before the world to be on that side.

And there has lately been a plain instance of like nature, among those called standing churches. Mr. Heze-

kiah

Abraham Smith, who was educated at New-Jersey college, came into New-England 4 years ago, with a proposal of only travelling and laboring a while, and then of returning back again; and under this view he was readily received into many pulpits: but a destitute society in Haverhill, by their pressing importunity, prevailed with him to alter his purpose, and stay with them; and when those ministers who had received him understood that, they turned against him with all their might, and one of them has held forth to the world in print, that when he received him, it was under an expectation that Mr. S. would keep his principles concerning baptism "private to himself," and neither openly hold them up, nor practice them among us. And he reflects very hard upon Mr. S. for disappointing that expectation. \* But we may boldly appeal to his conscience that he would not call it *charity* nor a *catholic temper*, for another sect to allow him only to *think* for himself, but not to *speake* his thoughts; or if he spake them, yet not to *practise* upon them lest it should offend others. And let who will deny others the liberty which they take themselves; or judge and set at naught their brethren for taking such liberty: yet the day is hastning, when we must all stand before the judgment seat of him who has eyes like a flame of fire.

### The Conclusion.

A few lessons of instruction must close the whole.

1. **M**AY we all learn the importance of Solomon's advice, to *Buy the truth and sell it not*. The end of buying and selling is mutual gain; and he who forsakes *all* for the truth as it is in Jesus, makes great gain to his own soul, and will prove a blessing to others: but they who make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, the whole world can't make up their loss.

2. Let us never imagine to promote the *cause of truth* by any *false methods*. Indeed God will over-rule every thing for his own glory; and in that sense we can do nothing against the truth, but for it: yet let us talk what we may of defending truth, or promoting its cause if at the same time we advance false arguments, or discover a wrong tem-  
per

\* See Mr. Parson's sermons on ACT. 16. 33. p. 17.

per and behavior, we thereby contract guilt to ourselves, and injure our fellow men.

3. Let none indulge the imagination of being neutral in this case: for all heaven is engaged for truth, and all hell against it; and this world is divided between them; so that he who is the truth and the life, says, He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. Mat. 12. 30. Therefore tho' many have been at ease from their youth, and glory in their steadiness in the way they were trained up in; and others, because they have no changes, therefore fear not God. (Psalm 55. 19.) but laugh at the infirmities or calamities of professors; yet they will soon find the reality of what truth declares, even that their judgment and damnation lingereth not. To be steadfast in the truth, is a weighty matter, but to change from error to truth, is of equal importance.

4. Learn what is the real cause of all the disorders in the world. As they were first introduced by hearkning to a creature instead of the creator; so the cause and nature of all our present disorders are the worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is over all, God blessed forever. And what higher worship can be offered to any being, than to fix our dependence upon him for light to direct, and for power to act? yet how much have we of such worship, in a nation where many fancy that both pagan and antichristian idolatry have long been destroyed? This work is carried on now, as it was formerly in the dark; every man in the chambers of his imagery. Ezek. 8. 12. God is good: and every soul that knows not the true good, has some false image of good set up in his mind, which go-

• To give a plain illustration of my meaning. I will mention an instance which equally cuts both ways. In our former disputes concerning baptism, I heard one advance it as a motive to embrace the baptist principles, that thereby providence had opened a door for a release from a burden of taxes: and the same day I heard another of equal note say, The baptist principles might be right, and he did not know but he should conform to them if he lived among them, but it would not do to make an overturn about it among us. I was then at a loss in the affair; But this made my soul cry, Alas where are we! that interest should be advanced as an argument, for a principle as truth, and honour as an argument against it! Each party can readily see corruption on the other side; yet alas! how little faithful charity is exercised, to distinguish between truth, and the corruptions and infirmities of those who profess it?



visions of living beings, yet these images are often covered so artfully, that they say, *The Lord seeth us not.* *Peace, order, zeal for the good old way*, and abundance of such fine names are often wrote upon the outside of this covering; and the great deceiver plays a double game thereby: for by this means he keeps them which are under this cover, easy in a conceit that they have religion; and by their evil conduct, he persuades others that they are as well without it as with it. Still laboring to keep all their attention fixed, some way or other upon the creature, *lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* 2. Cor. 4. 4.

And whenever the power of God is remarkably displayed, to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, a loud noise is soon raised about disorders, delusions and imprudencies; and all arts are used to blind peoples minds, and to settle them back into carnal security again. And no stratagem of the enemy has been more successful, than to mix and confound error with truth, in christians experiences, conversation, and conduct: and when their corruptions are discovered, sinners and hypocrites catch at them: for God says, *They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.* Hos. 4. 8. And the destroyer of souls would persuade them, that there is nothing in religion: or if there is some reality therein, yet that common people can't discern the difference, and therefore must be directed by such as know better than they. In order to accomplish this end, many who would be thought to know much, have often pretended to discern distinctions, where others can see no difference; while things which are really distinct in their nature, are confounded together. This wickedness has been wretchedly practised by some, under the pretence of *spiritual teaching*; as it has by others under the name of *great learning*.

It is a fact not to be disputed, that some men know more, and see further than others do, both in natural, and in spiritual things; but when real or pretended knowledge, is used to keep others in ignorance, and to excite a high opinion of themselves, instead of laboring to enlighten and benefit others; that is a certain token of such persons being ensnared by, if they are not under the full power of, the wisdom which is from beneath. For when there was much

Q. *mur-muring*

\* Mr. Edwards has clearly demonstrated this point, in his *Treatise of the will*. Part 2. Sect. 9.

*mur-muring among the common people, concerning him who spake, as no mere man ever did : some saying He is a good man, others saying, Nay, but he deceiveth the people : He was so far from checking their attempt to form a judgment of such matters, that he gave them an infallible rule to judge upon : viz. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory : but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness in him. John 7: 18. But as those who have a right to judge, yet many times don't judge right ; therefore he lays down two important lessons in the affair. One is, not to act as unconcerned spectators, but as persons really engaged to practice what they know. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. The other lesson is, not to judge in a superficial manner, by the appearance and shew which is made, but to judge righteous judgment ; to search carefully into the truth and reality of things.*

Thus the son of God plainly held forth the right which common people ever have to judge, both of the *doctrine and conduct of teachers* ; and the *meek he will guide in judgment*, while those who receive not the *love of the truth*, but have *pleasure in unrighteousness*, are constantly exposed to be given over to *strong delusions*. This being the order of Christ's kingdom ; hence see what a *disorder* it makes, when common christians are denied the free liberty of examining their teachers, and of acting according to their judgments in the affair ; and also that 'tis a great *disorder* to condemn and reproach any teachers, only because they are not owned by *rulers or learned ministers* : for by this very rule, our glorious Lord was condemned as a *deceiver*, and his followers stigmatized as *ignorant cursed people*, by men who were as famous in the world's esteem, for *learning, devotion, and order*, as any in our day, ver. 47—49. Nor is the *disorder* less on the other hand, when any under a pretence of *special teachings, and divine influence*, crowd their improvements upon those who are not edified thereby, and plead their right so to do, because they see further than others, who they say can't discern where they are : tho' (it may be) serious christians do see them at the same time, conduct in a *flesh-pleasing way*, and even not providing things *honest in the sight of men*.

Some such *spots and blemishes* have caused the greatest disorders that I have ever known among any of our churches.

ches ; and a principal reason of some such persons being left to go on, so far as they have in such a way, was a fear in humble souls of speaking evil (as many have done) of things they know not : and we ought always to be cautious in that respect, for 'tis like shooting in the dark, where we may be as likely to wound a friend as an enemy. What we know to be right, we ought to own, and to disown what we know to be wrong, and leave other things 'till they are opened to us. But here the case is plain, for Christ never gave authority to any to crowd upon others ; and we are commanded to *cease to hear instruction, that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.* Prov. 19. 27. And also to *withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly.*

It is an important part of gospel order, to have every member encouraged in the improvement of the gifts which are given them ; but for any to pretend, they have got so far out of sight of the least saint, either by human or divine teachings, that the saint can't understand them, when they properly improve their gifts, is as absurd as to tell of a candle shining so bright as not to give light unto all that are in the house. Mat. 5. 15. The divine direction is, *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you ? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish : for where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

### Appendix.

SOON after Mr. Fish's book was put into my hand, I received a sermon which a gentleman sent me from the westward, intitled, " The holiness of infants explained and improved ; or a vindication of the divine right of christian infants, to the privileges of the church ; and particularly to baptism, the initiating seal of the second covenant, in a sermon preached at Woodstock, second society, in the colony of Connecticut, to a numerous auditory, Dec. 19. 1765.



“By *Isaac Foster, V. D. M.* pastor of a church in *Stafford*.  
 Wherein my name is mentioned, and a few strokes are given  
 upon my letter to Mr. *Lord*. I shall therefore add a  
 brief reply thereto in this place. His text is, *1 Cor. 7. 14.*  
*Tho’ there is nothing said of baptism in the text or context,*  
*and all the argument turns only upon the term sanctified*  
*and holy: which words are used in three senses in scripture.*  
*As 1. For internal and spiritual purity. 2. For the external*  
*consecration and setting apart of persons or things to*  
*divine worship. In this sense the whole nation of Israel were*  
*holy; as they were set apart from all other nations to be*  
*God’s church; and so the place and furniture for worship*  
*among them were holy, being devoted to that use, in distinc-*  
*tion from all their common enjoyments. 3. These words*  
*are sometimes used for the lawful and free use of creature*  
*comforts, which God grants to his saints, while they are*  
*going on in a life of devotedness to him. Thus in a plain*  
*prophecy of gospel privileges and blessings it is said, In that*  
*day, shall there be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto*  
*the Lord;—Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall*  
*be holiness unto the Lord of hosts, Zech. 14. 20. 21.* Which  
 words I suppose intend the same thing that *Paul* expressed  
 in this very epistle, (after he had declared that those things  
 were lawful to christians which were unclean to the Jews,  
*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do*  
*all to the glory of God. 1. Cor. 10. 31.* So he says in *1 Tim.*  
*4. 4, 5. Every creature of God is good;—for it is sanctified by*  
*the word of God, and prayer; i. e. His word gives christians*  
*a warrant to take them, and by prayer they receive*  
*a blessing in the use of them.*  
 Now in my letter to Mr. *Lord*, I gave it as my mind,  
 that this third sense of the words *sanctified* and *holy*, was the  
 true intent of them in the text before us; and that the *Cor-*  
*inthians* writing to the apostle upon this affair (ver. 11.)  
 was doubtless occasioned by their reading in *Ezra 10.*  
*That the Jews were obliged to put away all the wives, and*  
*such as was born of them, which they had taken of other*  
*nations, that were not of their religion: which might natu-*  
*rally cause an enquiry, whether they must do so now or*  
*not? And the answer is in the negative, for the unbeliev-*  
*ing mate is sanctified, and their children holy.* And Mr.  
*Foster* entirely concurs with my sense of the occasion of the  
 words, and also as to the meaning of the word *sanctified*,  
 but he would have the word *holy* taken in the second sense  
 which was given above; and the only reason that he gives  
 for

for differing from me in that respect p. 8. is, "That the unbelieving party is not said to be sanctified in relation to God, but only in relation to the believing yoke-fellow." But he says, children are holy, "not in relation to any other but God only."

Upon which I would observe, that 'tis very evident in the text, that the children being holy, is the effect of the parents being sanctified, so that here we are presented with a number of absurdities. As 1. an effect which riseth above its cause. 2. With a case of conscience, which was occasioned by a text in *Ezra*, that obliged the Jews to put away their wives, and such as were born of them, as equally unclean; and yet the answer to it is declared, to mean something higher in the child than in the parent it sprang from. For Mr. Foster says, the unbelieving parents being "destitute of the sanctifying graces of the holy spirit of God, are unfit for communion with him." p. 5. Yet in the same page after saying, "The children of believers are as others, born in sin, and by nature children of wrath;" he goes on to say, "They are visibly sanctified, being set apart for God;" and declares, "It is such a sanctification or holiness as is intended, when the church and people of *Israel* are called holy; *Psal.* 50. 5. Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Here old sinners are declared to be unfit for communion with God, while 'tis asserted that young ones who are born in sin, are set apart for him! 3. We have a self-contradiction; for in p. 4. Mr. Foster referring to *Ezra* 10. 3. says, "'Tis just that those actions that are done against law, should be accounted not only unlawful, but null." But it was otherwise with those to whom the apostle wrote; for they were lawful man and wife; their marriage not being prohibited, they might not be parted, and their children not unclean, but holy. Yet in page 7 when he is opposing Dr. Gill, he says, "The question propounded by the *Corinthians*, was not whether a believing husband and unbelieving wife, were lawful man and wife together? No body doubted that." However I will not waste paper, nor abuse the reader with remarks upon all the stuff which his sermon abounds with; but would just observe, that the new-testament certainly gives the same sense of these terms, sanctified and holy, else-where, as we do here; and those who give the other sense of them are forced, all of them, to borrow it from the national church in the old testament: and Mr.

Foster

Foster says, "I freely own that I know no other difference, betwixt a national church and a congregational church, but one is great, and the other little" p. 20. If all would come out so plain, we should hope to see the controversy soon brought to an issue: for the first constitution of the national church, in *Abraham's household*, is very express; the covenant included every man-child that was born in his house, and bought with his money of the stranger. These were all in that covenant, and therefore were to have the token of it administered upon them. *Circumcision* did not bring them into covenant; natural birth or purchase brought them in, and being in, if there was one soul of them that continued without the token of the covenant, God said, *That soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.* Gen. 17. 13, 14, 27. And when the passover was instituted in that church, the Lord said, *every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, THEN shall he eat thereof.* Exod. 12. 44.

No words could be more plain than these are, to describe the exact limits of the national church; yet Mr. *Dickinson* asserts, that the patent sealed by baptism, is "The very same parchment that was given to *Abraham*;" and Mr. *Fish* and *Foster* concur in the same sense. But if so, then out of their own mouths they are condemned; for instead of excluding half the subjects, as they tell us of, they exclude more than a hundred to one. *Abraham*, before this, had 118 servants, born in his own house, who were fit for soldiers. Gen. 14. 14. And in the self-same day that this covenant was made with him, he circumcised his son and ALL the MEN of his house. Here was but one of his own seed to such a great household, (but now their plea is, only for little children.) And if we view the antitype, we may see as plain a description of the gospel church. *Paul* shews to the *Ephefians*, that *Christ* had broken down the middle wall of partition between them and the *Jews*, and came and preached peace to both, whereby their enmity was slain; and thro' him they both had access by one spirit unto the Father, and were fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and were built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ himself* being the chief corner-stone, Eph. 2. 14—20.

Now if Mr. *Foster* knows of no other difference between these two churches but only what respects their number, I would desire him to go to school with *Nicodemus*, and learn the difference betwixt being born of the flesh, and a being



In my letter, I had observed, that the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, and many means were used for the conversion of members within the church: whereas now, the gospel is freely preached to all nations, and the lively stones, which are the materials of this spiritual house, which is the antitype of Solomon's temple, are prepared without, before they are builded together for an habitation of God thro' the spirit. Upon which Mr. Foster gives several cants, and says, he knows not what I mean, unless it is, "That there is now no means" used for the "conversion of members within the church." p. 21.

But if the observing this difference, that the means for conversion were confined within the Jewish church, which are now freely used with others who are without the Christian church, can convey no other meaning in it, than that there are no means used for conversion within this church; then I despair of ever conveying any just ideas to mankind! However, when we see how this man leaves his own meaning, we shall not wonder at this treatment of others; for upon my saying that Paul takes much pains to keep Abraham's natural and spiritual seed distinct, he says, "Abraham never had a spiritual seed, nor no other man, the man Jesus Christ excepted." p. 24. And leaves it so. Now whether he thinks, Onesimus whom Paul had begotten in his bands, was his natural or spiritual son I know not; neither shall I detain my reader, any further than to correct two stories which this writer has published.

In warning the people of Woodstock of their danger, Mr. Foster says, "By going after those who are now causing divisions and separations among you, and conniving at their wicked doctrines and practices, you will be in danger of falling into such errors, and embracing such opinions, as will render your salvation altogether hopeless." p. 28. Then after allowing that there were some sober baptists in the land 20 years ago, he says, "As to our present separate baptists, 'tis well known that in opinion and practice, they are notoriously bad, and seem daily growing worse. Witness Dr. Davis's book, which so far as I can understand, is generally liked among them. This man was as famous a baptist preacher as any in the country a few years ago, and what he is now come to, his book will show, in which he blasphemously attributes all conviction of sin to the Devil." p. 29.

This I perceive was delivered from the pulpit, which makes me think of Dr. Franck's saying, that he who hears such

such a railer does not hear Christ, but the devil himself; for what could that *accuser* say more false than this is! The pastor of the baptist church in *Stafford*, informed me some years ago of one *Davis* a physician, who was cast out of that church, for broaching antinomian errors; and that he published a small pamphlet upon them afterward: but I never saw the man nor his book, and 'tis so far from being "generally liked among" our churches, that very few have even seen his book, and Mr. *Foster* may be boldly challenged to produce an instance if he can of one member in the baptist church in *Woodstock*, or any church which they hold fellowship with, who like or will countenance the horrid principle he speaks of.

The other story concerns *Woodstock* in particular. Mr. *Foster* says, "I am informed that not long since, there was  
"a hopeful prospect of the revival of serious godliness  
"among you; that a number of persons in this place, appeared seriously and suitably concerned about the great  
"things of God and religion, and were enquiring the way  
"to Zion, with their faces thitherward; but no sooner  
"did these men, like a destroying flood, come in among you,  
"but they flung all into confusion, as you see this day, and  
"in a moment dashed all your hopes of a revival of godliness amongst you." p. 33. 34.

Now the plain state of their case, as I have it from good authorities, is briefly thus. Vanity and extravagance, especially among young people in that place, had greatly prevailed; till a young man, who had been aingleader in frolicking, happened to hear a baptist elder preach, in Dec. 1763. which was blest as a means of his *awakening*, and he continued under *conviction* till the next *March*, and then was brought out of darkness into marvellous light; whereupon four of his old companions came one evening, to try to get him back to his former way; but instead of that, two of them were seized under *conviction*; and they were moved to set up religious meetings, instead of their former frolicks; which meetings in a few weeks increased to several hundreds; and these meetings which were carried on by prayer, singing, reading, and mutual exhortation, were made a happy means of the awakening and hopeful conversion of a considerable number. And tho' they gladly improved occasional opportunities of hearing baptist elders, yet they still attended the parish meeting, till the minister there, upon a fast which was appointed for the purpose, got some neighbouring ministers to labour to regulate them:

them: who plainly warned them against the first instruments of their awakening, as being the *deceivers* which should come in the last times. And they evidently set up the same standard that we have seen so much of before, of *measuring themselves by themselves*, so as to read all off for *delusion*, which interfered with the order and honor of the old ministers and churches as they stood.

But for young converts to hear, the instrument's and nature of that work, which turn'd them from vanity to love Christ, treated at such a rate, it only served to convince them that the ministers who treated things at that rate, were wrong, and so finally caused a separation from them, and a baptist church was gathered in that place. The former part of this account I had from the mouth of the young man who was first awakened there, and in the presence of one of the two young men who were convinced by him; and the rest I have had attested by many substantial evidences.

I leave the reader to make his own remarks; and shall only observe that this author has intermixed with these slanders, some quotations of the most *bitter* sentences against the baptists, that he could find in the antient fathers; it makes me think of a saying of one of the *old Martyrs*, "Alas! says he, such is the wickedness of these "our last days, that nothing moves us!—Neither the "pure doctrine, the godliness of life, nor good example of "the antient fathers.—If in any thing they erred, that "will their charitable children embrace, *publish* and maintain with sword, faggot and fire: but in vain they strive "against the stream; for tho' in despite of the truth, by "force of the ears of crafty persuasion, they may bring "themselves into the haven of *hell*; yet can they not "make all men believe that the banks move, while the "ship faileth, nor ever shall be able to turn the direct "course of the stream of God's truth."

Sufferers mirror Vol. I. p. 103.

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such a railer does not hear Christ, but the devil himself; for what could that *accuser* say more false than this is! The pastor of the baptist church in *Stafford*, informed me some years ago of one *Davis* a physician, who was cast out of that church, for broaching antinomian errors; and that he published a small pamphlet upon them afterward; but I never saw the man nor his book, and 'tis so far from being "generally liked among" our churches, that very few have even seen his book, and Mr. *Foster* may be boldly challenged to produce an instance if he can of one member in the baptist church in *Woodstock*, or any church which they hold fellowship with, who like or will countenance the horrid principle he speaks of.

The other story concerns *Woodstock* in particular. Mr. *Foster* says, "I am informed that not long since, there was a hopeful prospect of the revival of serious godliness among you; that a number of persons in this place, appeared seriously and suitably concerned about the great things of God and religion, and were enquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward; but no sooner did these men, like a destroying flood, come in among you, but they flung all into confusion, as you see this day, and in a moment dashed all your hopes of a revival of godliness amongst you." p. 33. 34.

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Sufferers mirror Vol. I. p. 103.

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